BYZANTINA LODZIENSIA

XXVI

Paweł Filipczak

An introduction to the Byzantine administration in Syro-Palestine on the eve of the Arab conquest



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Series of the Department of Byzantine History of the University of Łódź

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Professor Waldemar Ceran

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Translated by

Artur Mękarski

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Contents

Preface

The work is an introduction to the topic of the Byzantine administration in Syro-Palestine in the sixth and seventh centuries (between the reign of Justinian and Heraclius). As such, it offers a general review of what the modern scholarship has to say about the issue in question, including some necessary corrections and additions. In writing the book I tried to use a pellucid and jargon-free language. However, the use of plain language, which is usually expected of works that fall into the "introduction" genre, providing a shallow analysis devoid of any significant insights into the problem at hand, does not, I hope, apply here. The work is based on primary sources, although some of the existing sources that might shed some light on the issue dealt with here are probably omitted from my analyses. Predominant are literary texts written in Greek, offering the perspective of the Byzantines. Arab sources, to which I refer relying on scholarly literature, remain in the background. I draw heavily on the findings presented in a great number of articles and monographs, focusing, however, on those that are most relevant to a specific topic with which I am dealing. If one wanted to base each of the three parts of this book on all the available literature and on the greatest possible number of primary sources, striving to resolve every single issue raised in this book and attempting to deal with the most heated polemics that these issues have provoked, one would have to write three separate monographs. Yet I am convinced that the publication of such an introductory guide to

the subject in question is fully justified. In addition to being particularly useful for students of the history of Byzantium, it should also be of some help to more experienced scholars.

I do not offer answers to all important questions that appear in the discussion of particular aspects of the Byzantine administration in the period under consideration. The work, for example, provides no explanation of the establishment of the theme system by Emperor Heraclius in Syro-Palestine. On the other hand, however, I give an account of the scholarly discussion concerning the themes, presenting the arguments offered by scholars who have covered this issue. Finally, I also attempt to outline research goals to be pursued with regard to this controversial problem in the future.

The construction of the work is simple. In the first part, devoted to administrative geography, I reconstruct the administrative divisions in Syro-Palestine, describe the administrative infrastructure of the cities that served as the capitals of particular provinces and offer introductory remarks on the deployment of particular units of the Roman army and on the territorial jurisdiction of military commanders. In the first chapter the topic is approached from a topographical angle. A prosopographical perspective is adopted in the second part of the work. It provides biographical information on Byzantine officials who were entrusted with the task of administering Syro-Palestine – governors of particular provinces, governors of the Diocese of the East and military commanders stationed in the region. The third part of the work can be referred to as "conception-related", for in giving an account of the changes brought to the imperial administration, I attempt to reveal the principles and ideas that underpinned the introduction of these changes.

The construction of the book requires one more explanation. The division of the imperial administration into civilian and military branches and, consequently, into two distinct hierarchies of public officers as well as into two territorial structures, took hold during the reign of Constantine the Great (306–337). Although the view of such a bipolar system, held in older literature and suggesting a clear division of authority between different groups of imperial officials, has recently been subject to revision, the existence of the system is not, in general outline, denied. I accept it in this book, dividing the first chapter into two parts, one dealing with a civilian administration (provinces, a diocese and a prefecture) and the other concerned with a military one (military districts governed by duces). The same pattern is followed in the second part of the book, separating the governors of particular provinces and of the Diocese of the East (that is, civilian officials) from the commanders of provincial troops. The adoption of such

a structure is designed to add clarity to the exposition of the topic and should not be treated as an indication of a poor knowledge of the administrative realities of the era.

In writing the work, I have encountered some difficulties in trying to maintain a fully consistent approach to the spelling of foreign-language names. In the first chapter I rely on a simplified, that is, devoid of diacritical marks, spelling of the geographical names of Arab and Turkish origin to be found in *Barrington Atlas of Greek and Roman World* (ed. R.J.A. Talbert, Princeton 2000; [while preparing this book I did not have access to *Tabula Imperii Byzantini 15. Syria (Syria Prōtē, Syria Deutera, Syria Euphratēsia)*, ed. K.-P. Todt, B.A. Vest, vol. I–III, Wien 2014–2015]. For the sake of consistency, I stick to the simplified spelling of geographical names later on in the book (hence, for example, Tartous and not Ṭarṭūs; Tripolis and not Ṭarābulus; Ajnadayn and not Ajnādayn; Yarmuk and not Al-Yarmūk). However, in some cases such an approach was not possible. In terms of geographical nomenclature, I found it necessary to preserve a scholarly transcription used by the authors whose views I present in the third chapter (hence, for example, ajnād of Ḥimṣ or ajnād Filasṭīn). As far as the Arab personal names are concerned, I apply a full scholarly transcription, following the spelling used by *Encyclopaedia of Islam* or – if a given name is missing from *EI* – following the general principles adopted in *EI* (hence, for example, Muḥammad, and not Muhammad or Farva Ibn ʿAmr al-Ǧuḏāmī, and not Farva Ibn Amr al-Gudami). I use the English versions of the Greek or Latin names of persons, if they are universally used in anglicised form (hence, for example, Theodore, and not Theodoros/Theodorus).

The Polish edition of this book, in a slightly abridged form, was published as one of the parts of the monograph *Bizancjum i Arabowie. Spotkanie cywilizacji (VI–VIII w.)*, ed. T. Wolińska and P. Filipczak, Warszawa 2015, p. 90–176.

Paweł Filipczak
Łódź, October 2015

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Paweł Filipczak

Introduction

Syro-Palestine. The region of a long and undisturbed coexistence of the Byzantines and the Arabs, but also – or perhaps above all – of their first and most important military confrontation. It is from this region, forming something of a gate to the western world, that the Arabs launched their offensive against other Byzantine territories, capturing the whole of the North Africa and a number of more important islands on the Mediterranean Sea[1].

The rapid loss of Syro-Palestine by the Byzantines provokes a question concerning the state of the imperial administration in the region on the eve of the Arab conquest. In terms of Byzantium's political history, this "eve" is usually bound up with the reign of Emperor Heraclius. However, as far as the history of Byzantine administration is concerned, it needs to be regarded as lasting longer than the reign of the emperor mentioned above. The provincial administration,

[1] See for example R. Mantran, *L'expansion musulman VIIe–XIe siècles*, Paris 1995, p. 101–104; H. Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests. How the Spread of Islam changed the World We Live In*, London 2007, p. 145–149; Th. Bianquis, P. Guichard, F. Mahfoudh, *La première conquête et ses frontières*, [in:] *Les débuts du monde musulman VIIe–Xe siècle. De Muḥammad aux dynastie autonomes*, éd. Th. Bianquis, P. Guichard, M. Tillier, Paris 2012, p. 109–112. The long held view concerning the first Arab conquest of Lower and Middle Egypt has recently been subject to revision by Phill Booth (*The Muslim Conquest of Egypt Reconsidered*, TM 17, 2013, p. 639–670).

as it existed in 610, that is, in the year of Heraclius' accession to power, took shape in the reign of Justinian I, the last great reformer of state machinery in the period prior to the Arab conquest. Thus the work covers a timespan of about one hundred years which preceded the loss of the eastern territories by the Byzantines. For clarity's sake some references are also made to the administrative reforms introduced at the turn of the third and fourth centuries[2].

Works that cover long periods of time are usually cross-sectional in nature, and so is the text presented below. My first concern here is with the Empire's administrative geography. I will try to reconstruct the divisions of the Byzantine administration and to identify the cities in which both local and state authorities were based. Then, I will turn to carry out a prosopographical analysis of all biographical information concerning high ranking officials whose jurisdiction extended over the region of Syro-Palestine: provincial governors, governors of the Diocese of the East, and military leaders stationed in this region. In presenting a cadre of state officials, I found it necessary to follow geographical criteria, for the separation of civilian and military authority was not always strictly observed in the Empire, and in some of its parts – like, for example, in Arabia – actually never took hold.

Concentrating around two key issues, geographical and biographical, the work is structured in a way which opens up a possibility of obtaining significant insights that go far beyond the field of topography or prosopography. The analysis of these issues serves as the point of departure for the discussion of some institutional and social changes which, taken together, added up to the evolution of the administrative system in the sixth and seventh centuries. It also highlights the need to entirely redefine the category of the Empire's top provincial officials.

The topic dealt with here is not new. However, a thorough discussion of the state of research into the problem, the various aspects of which have attracted scholarly attention since the latter half of the nineteenth century, lies beyond the scope of this chapter. Suffice it to say that the reforms of territorial administration put in place during the reign of Justinian I has been discussed in a great number of works by authors representing all important centres of Byzantinological studies. Thus this contribution draws heavily on the findings of modern scholarship, presenting a variety of views (scattered throughout the book) on the functioning of the Byzantine administration in Syro-Palestine in the period under consideration.

[2] See also H. K e n n e d y, *The Last Century of Byzantine Syria. A Reinterpretation*, BF 10, 1985, p. 141–183.

The convention adopted here does not require a thorough discussion of primary sources – I will confine myself to describing their essential characteristics and to indicating those of them that are most relevant for the topic in question. Primary sources are certainly unevenly distributed in chronological terms. The long reign of Justinian I appears to be well documented, although it, too, is not without "blank spots". However, the further towards the seventh century we move, the smaller the number of the sources on which we can draw becomes, and those that do exist are usually poor in content. It has been repeatedly stressed in scholarly literature that there is a poignantly small number of sources originating from the period of the Arab conquests. It holds true for both Byzantine (Greek, Latin, or written in Syriac language) and Arab texts[3]. All the information concerning the provincial administration in Syro-Palestine during the reign of Emperor Heraclius is very scarce, and thus difficult to interpret.

What distinguishes the sources in question is their genre diversity. The analysis of the way in which the provincial administration functioned is based on classic works of Greek historiography, Church histories, chronicles, imperial constitutions, hagiographies, rhetorical and theological works, as well as on texts produced by imperial administration. Among the latter of particular note are two sources on which I heavily draw in the first chapter of the work.

The first of these sources is entitled *Synekdèmos*, a title which should be translated as a fellow-traveller. In its present form, the text, written in around 535 by Hierocles – who was also known as *grammaticus*, that is, a teacher or a secretary – is actually nothing but a simple list of cities, divided according to provinces in which they were located, with the rank of particular governors attached. *Synekdèmos*, although drawing on some earlier official records that are thought to have been brought into being in the mid-fifth century, is presumed today to refer to the first years of Justinian I's reign[4]. The second work is *A Description of the Roman World* (*Descriptio orbis romani*), attributed to George of Cyprus. It is a register of provinces, divided into cities and villages that lay within their borders. The source was once assumed to have come into existence at the end of

[3] The problem has recently been raised by H. K e n n e d y: *Great Arab Conquest…*, p. 2 and 22. In older literature the topic was covered, among others, by W.E. K a e g i, *Initial Byzantine Reactions to the Arab Conquest*, [in:] *The Expansion of the Early Islamic State*, ed. F.M. D o n n e r, Aldershot 2008, p. 113 [= W.E. K a e g i, *Initial Byzantine Reactions to the Arab Conquest*, ChH 38, 1969, p. 139–149].

[4] See A.H.M. J o n e s, *The Cities of Eastern Roman Provinces*, ed. M. A v i - Y o n a h et al., Oxford 1971, p. 514–521; *Le Synekdèmos d'Hiéroklès et l'opuscule géographique de Georges de Chypre*, éd. E. H o n i g m a n n, Bruxelles 1939, p. 1–2; T.E. G r e g o r y, *ODB* II, p. 930 [s.v. *Hierokles*].

the sixth century. However, more recent studies date it to the beginning of that century, or, to be more precise, to the period directly preceding Justinian's rise to power. According to one theory, *Descriptio* is based on the information derived from Hierocles' work, coupled with some brief geographical and hagiographical descriptions. According to another, both authors relied on the same set of official records dating from the mid-fifth century[5]. In spite of the doubts that can be raised as to the authorship of these texts and their mutual relations, both *Synekdèmos* and *Descriptio orbis romani* form the basis of the reconstruction of the administrative divisions of the Byzantine Syro-Palestine in the last century of its existence[6].

An analysis of normative sources typifies every scholarly contribution devoted to the issues of imperial administration. These sources include, first of all, legal acts (edicts, amendments to the existing laws, digests) issued both by Justinian and, less commonly, by other rulers, especially his successors. Scholars rely on these acts for determining the titles held by provincial governors, for reconstructing the shape of local government during the reign of Justinian I and, above all, for determining changes that occurred in the Diocese of the East. Normative sources, more than any other kind of evidence, reflect the evolution of administrative system towards the end of antiquity. Legal sources are also used to reconstruct the way in which the authorities planned to reform the institutions of local administrations. Scholarly literature emphasises the fact that a great number of imperial institutions should be regarded as having "ideal" rather than "factual" character[7].

[5] See A.H.M. J o n e s, *The Cities...*, p. 515–516; *Synekdèmos*, p. 49–50; A. K a z h d a n, *ODB* II, p. 837–838 [s.v. *George of Cyprus*].

[6] Cf. the list of sources on administrative geography of the Late Roman Empire: A.H.M. J o n e s, *The Later Roman Empire 284–602. A Social, Economic and Administrative Survey*, vol. III, Oxford 1964, p. 381. See also R. B r ü n n o w, A. von D o m a s z e w s k i, *Die Provinzia Arabia auf Grund zweier in den Jahren 1897 und 1898 unternommen Reisen und der Berichte früherer Reisender*, Strassbourg 1909, vol. III, p. 256–263 with the detailed list of the provinces in the Early and Later Roman Empire in the Middle East, and with accurate list of sources on administrative geography.

[7] E. W i p s z y c k a, *Źródła normatywne świeckie* (*The Secular Normative Sources*), [in:] *Vademecum historyka starożytnej Grecji i Rzymu* (*Vade mecum for the Historian of the ancient Greece and Rome*), vol. III, *Źródłoznawstwo późnego antyku*, ed. E. W i p s z y c k a, Warszawa 1999, p. 614; J. W i e w i o r o w s k i, *Stanowisko prawne rzymskich dowódców wojsk prowincjonalnych – duces w prowincjach Scythia Minor i Moesia Secunda* (*The Legal Status of the Roman Military Commanders. Duces in the provinces of Scythia Minor and Moesia Secunda*), Poznań 2007, p. 20; i d e m, *Sądownictwo późnorzymskich wikariuszy diecezji (The Judicary of Diocesan Vicars in the Later Roman Empire)*, Poznań 2012, p. 33–34.

Inscriptions form a specific part of the source material used in this chapter. New inscriptions, discovered *in situ* in different countries of the Middle East, are increasing in number. Older inscriptions, on the other hand, undergo the process of new reconstruction, which in turn yield new interpretations. Those originating in the area of Syro-Palestine are to be found in a number of corpuses containing epigraphic material from all over the Empire[8], but, of course, the collections of inscriptions coming from the region of Syria are most important[9]. Nowadays, the largest corpus of inscriptions, whose scholarly value can hardly be overrated, is the series *Les inscriptions grecques and latines de la Syrie*, which has been intermittently published since 1929 (along with *Inscriptions de la Jordanie* which form an integral part of the whole collection)[10].

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[8] Cf. *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum* (eds. A. Böckh, J. Franz, E. Curtius, A. Kirchoff, vol. I–IV, Berlin 1828–1859; *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (published annual from 1923; the current editors: A. Chaniotis, Th. Corsten, R.S. Stroud, J.H.M. Strubbe, Leyden); *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, mainly vol. III. *Supplementum. Inscriptionum Orientis et Illyrici Latinarum supplementum*, ed. Th. Mommsen, O. Hirschfeld, A. Domaszewski, Berlin 1902 (reprint Berlin 1961–1967).

[9] Cf. *Inscriptions grecques and latines de la Syrie* (ed. W.H. Waddington, Paris 1870; reprint: Rome 1968 [Syria], Hildesheim 1972 [Asia Minor]); *Syria. Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904–1905 and 1909. Division III, Greek and Latin Inscriptions in Syria*, *Section A, Parts 1–7. Southern Syria*, eds. H.C. Butler, E. Litmann, D. Magie, D. Reed Stuart, Leyden 1907–192; *Division IV, Semitic Inscriptions*, Sections A-D, ed. E. Littmann, Leyden 1914–1949. *Inscriptions from Palestina Tertia. Vol. I a. The Greek Inscriptions from Ghor es-Safi*, eds. Y.E. Meimaris, K.I. Kritikakou-Nikolaropoulou, Athens 2005; *Inscriptions from Palestina Tertia. Vol. I b. The Greek Inscriptions from Ghor es-Safi. Supplement (Khirbet Qazone, Feinan)*, eds. Y.E. Meimaris, K.I. Kritikakou-Nikolaropoulou, Athens 2008; *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae. A multi-lingual corpus of the inscriptions from Alexander to Muhammad*, vol. I (Jerusalem), ed. M.M. Cotton et al., Berlin–New York 2010; vol. 1/2 (Jerusalem), ed. H.M. Cotton et al., Berlin–Boston 2012; vol. 2 (Caesarea and the Middle Coast), ed. W. Ameling, Berlin–Boston 2011; vol. 3 (South Coast), ed. W. Ameling, Berlin–Boston 2014.

[10] See above all: D. Feissel, *Chroniques d'épigraphie byzantine 1987–2004*, Paris 2006, p. 157–285 (a detailed list of epigraphic publications pertaining to the region of the Diocese of the East, divided according to geographical criteria into particular provinces and cities); *Guide de l'épigraphiste. Bibliographie des épigraphies antiques et médiévales*, éd. F. Bérard, D. Feissel, N. Laubry, P. Petitmengin, D. Rousset, M. Sève et al., Paris 2010, p. 80–85 (contains bibliographic records of inscription corpuses, including the selection of inscriptions originating from particular cities and regions of Syro-Palestine); p. 170–172 (contains a separate list of works on juridical epigraphics); p. 250–252 (contains a separate list of the most important works on the Late Roman Empire). See also G. Greatrex, S.N.C. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars. Part II AD 363–630. A Narrative Sourcebook*, London – New York 2002, p. 238–245 (a short review of epigraphic sources).

CHAPTER

I

Places

Part I
The Units of Civilian Administration

Provinces

Syria Prima. Beginning in the reign of Septimius Severus (193–211), a larger part of northern Syria was occupied by the province known as Celesyria (*Syria Coele*). This province was then divided into two smaller units Syria I (*Syria Prima*) and Syria II (*Syria Secunda*) – during the first years of Theodosius II's reign (408–450), probably between 413 and 417[1]. The newly established province – *Syria Prima* – covered a region extending from the Mediterranean Sea, through the Amanus Mountains and the plains of the lower and middle Orontes, to Limestone Massif in the Syrian interior[2].

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[1] J. Balty, *Sur la date de création de la Syria Secunda*, Sy 57.2–4, 1980, p. 465–481. See also G.A. Harrer, *Studies in the History of the Roman Province of Syria*, Princeton 1915, p. 87–90.

[2] *Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World*, ed. R.J.A. Talbert, Princeton 2000, p. 67, 68, 102. Concerning the geography and historical geography of Syria *Prima* and Syria

The provincial governor held the rank of consular (*consularis*) and resided in Antioch (Antakya, Turkey)[3]. The governor's seat, probably from the reign of Emperor Zeno (474–491) and certainly in the first two or three decades of the sixth century, was located in the old building of Commodus' bathhouse, near Valens' forum[4]. The forum lay on the left-bank area of the city, north-east of the oldest Hellenistic district, which had been built by the city's founder, Seleucus I Nicator[5]. A bronze statue of Constantine the Great was erected in front of the consular building during Constantine's reign and it is reported that this statue was still standing during the first decades of the sixth century[6].

In addition to Antioch, the following cities lay within Syria Prima's administrative borders: Seleukeia Pieria (Samandağ, Turkey), Laodicea (Lattaquié, Syria), Gabala (Jebele, Syria), Paltos (Arab el-Moulk, Syria), Beroia (Alep, Syria) and Chalcis ad Belum (Qinnesrin, Syria)[7].

Secunda, see also classic title: R. Dussaud, *La Topographie historique de la Syrie antique et médiévale*, Paris 1927, p. 165–246; 413–446.

[3] *Synekdèmos*, p. 39; *Descriptio*, p. 62. I am basing the modern localisation of the places listed in *Synekdèmos*, *Descriptio orbis romani* and (later) in *Notitia Dignitatum*, on maps in *Barrington Atlas*... (maps 67–71), indices to the maps (*Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World. Map-by-Map Directory*, vol. II, ed. R.J.A. Talbert, Princeton–Oxford 2000, p. 1027–1074), old, but nonetheless precise commentaries of Eduard Böcking to his edition of *Notitia Dignitatum* (*Notitia Dignitatum*, ed. E. Böcking, Bonnae 1853 [reprint: La Vergne 2009, p. 341–395]), as well as from the internet site *Digital Atlas of the Roman Empire* edited by Johan Åhlfeldt from the Lund University (imperium.ahlfeldt.se). In the case of some Palestinian names I consulted also *TIR.IP* and K. Gutwein, *Third Palestine. A Regional Study in Byzantine Urbanization*, Lincoln 2000.

[4] Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *De insidiis*, 35 (p. 166–167) contains the account of the riots staged by circus factions in about 484, which suggests that the praetorium of the governor was situated near Valens' forum, see P. Filipczak, *Władze państwowe wobec zamieszek fakcji cyrkowych w Antiochii w świetle Kroniki Jana Malalasa (State Authorities towards Factional Unrest in Antioch in the Light of the Chronicle of John Malalas)*, PZH 2004, 6, p. 35–49. John Malalas, XIII, 30 offers the account of Valens' building investments which includes the statement that "now" (transl. E. Jeffreys, R. Scott, p. 184), that is, during Malalas' stay in Antioch (from his birth in about 490 to 540 at the latest) praetorium was situated in the building called Commodion. See also G. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria: from Seleucos to the Arab Conquest*, Princeton 1961, p. 405–406, 633–634.

[5] O. Müller, *Antiquitates Antiochenae. Commentationes duae*, Gottingae 1839, p. 109–110; G. Downey, *A History of Antioch*..., p. 632–640.

[6] John Malalas, XIII, 3. G. Downey, *A History of Antioch*..., p. 349, n. 144.

[7] *Synekdèmos*, p. 39; *Descriptio*, p. 63. On Syro-Palestinian cities, including Phoenicia and the region of Euphrates, see for example: E. Honigmann, *Historische Topographie von Nordsyrien im Altertum*, ZDPV 46, 1923, pp. 149–193 ; V. Chapot, *La frontière de l'Euphrate de Pompée à la conquéte Arabe*, Roma 1967, p. 269–326; A.H.M. Jones: *The Cities of Eastern*

Syria Secunda. In terms of the area it occupied, *Syria Secunda* was the largest Roman province in Syria. It covered the area of northwest, central and eastern Syria, stretching from the Mediterranean Sea in the west, the coastal range of the Bargylus Mountains through the plain of the middle Orontes in the interior, to the Syrian Desert in the east[8].

The provincial governor, holding the title of *praeses*[9] and, from around 535, consular (*consularis*)[10] was based in Apamea on the Orontes (today Qalaat el-Moudiq, Syria)[11]. The consular residence was established in the so-called House of the Triclinus, built on a rectangular plan, standing in the south-eastern part of the city. It was equipped with a ceremonial hall (with a total area of about 110 square metres) paved with floor mosaics representing a great hunt. One of the mosaics portrays the virtue of courage that characterises the emperor or his provincial representative. It is accompanied by an inscription, which refers to this figure as the "greatest Apellion" (although it does not name his office). As shall be demonstrated in the prosopographical part of this chapter, such a term was often used in epigraphic material with regard to imperial officials (*comes*, *dux*, *praeses*). It can be argued that in 539 this Apellion, although now unknown, served as the governor of the province and that he resided at this time in the House of the Triclinus. A complex of private bathhouses, in addition to a number

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Roman Provinces, ed. M. A v i - Y o n a h et al., Oxford 1971, p. 226–294; M. A v i - Y o n a h, *Gazetteer of Roman Palestine*, Jerusalem 1976; Y. T s a f i r, L. D i S e g n i, J. G r e e n, *Gazetteer*, [in:] *TIR.IP*, p. 53–263; M. S a r t r e, *D'Alexandre à Zénobie. Histoire du Levant antique IVe siècle av. J.-C. – IIIe siècle ap. J.-C.*, Paris – Beyrouth 2001, *passim* (mainly p. 639–733); G. C o h e n, *The Hellenistic Settlements in Syria, the Red Sea Basin and North Africa*, Berkeley–London 2006, p. 71–222; The abridged bibliography on the cities of Syro-Palestine can be found also in M.A. C a s a n o v a, A. E g e a V i v a n c o s, *Selección bibliográfica sobre La Siria romano-cristiana*, AnC 15, 1998, p. 27–37; see also the monumental work with bibliography of 1300 archaeological places in Syria and Lebanon – G. L e h m a n n, *Bibliographie der archäologischen Fundstellen und Surveys in Syrien und Libanon,* Rahden 2002.

[8] *Barrington Atlas…*, p. 67, 68, 102.

[9] *Synekdèmos*, p. 39 (the rank of the governor given in the source, in Greek – ἡγεμών – may mean a governor of any rank. Hegemons are often identified with presidents (*praesides*) of provinces. See H.J. M a s o n, *Greek Terms for Roman Institutions. A Lexicon and Analysys*, Toronto 1974, p. 144). See also *A Greek English Lexicon*, ed. H.G. L i d d e l l, R. S c o t t et al., Oxford 1996, p. 762 [s.v. ἡγεμόνεια]. Cf. *CIC, Novellae*, VIII (*consularis*).

[10] B. K ü b l e r, *RE* IV/7, col. 1142 [s.v. *consularis*].

[11] *Synekdèmos*, p. 39; *Descriptio*, p. 63. On the topography of the city from the Hellenistic to the Arab period, see J. B a l t y, J.Ch. B a l t y, *Le cadre topographique et historique*, [in:] *Colloque Apamée de Syrie. Bilan des recherches archéologiques 1965–1968. Actes du colloque tenu à Bruxelles les 29 et 30 avril 1969*, éd. J. B a l t y et al., Bruxeles 1969, p. 29–51. However, the work contains no information concerning the seats of either local or state administration.

of other rooms, formed an integral part of this residence, which is believed to have been constructed around 539, during the reign of Justinian I[12].

Syria Secunda comprised the following cities, along with their associated territories: Epiphaneia (Hama, Syria), Areth(o)usa (Restan, Syria), Larissa (Shaizar, Syria), Mariamme (Mariamin, Syria), Balanea (Baniyas, Syria), Raphaneai (Rafniye, Syria) and Seleukobelos (Jisr es-Shoghour, Syria)[13].

Euphratensis (*Euphratensia*). This province was formed in the first half of the fourth century, during the reign of Diocletian (284–305), or, more probably, towards the end of the 30s of the fourth century, during the reign of Constantine I (306–337), or the beginning of the reign of Constantius (337–361)[14]. Euphratesia was carved out of the eastern part of Celesyria, situated along the Euphrates river. It occupied a vast area on the right bank of the central part of the river, at the point at which it takes on the shape of a bow bent westwards. Geographically, the lands are part of northern Mesopotamia, eastern Syria and south-eastern Asia Minor[15]. The governor of the province, holding the rank of *praeses*, was based in Hierapolis (Membidj, Syria)[16]. The location of government buildings remains unknown, as none of them survive[17].

Euphratesia comprised the following cities: Cyrrhus (Nebi Ouri, Syria), Samosata (Samsat, Turkey), Doliche (Dülük, Turkey), Zeugma (Belkis, Turkey), Germanikeia (Kahramanmaraş, Turkey), Perre (Pirun, Turkey), Nicopolis (İslahiye, Turkey), Skenarchia (the identification of that place is uncertain and it is sometimes, probably erroneously, equated with the city of Eski-Meskene/Ba-

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[12] J. Balty, *La grande mosaïque de chasse du triclinius*, Bruxelles 1939, p. 35; V. Verhoogen, *Apamée de Syrie aux Musées royaux d'art et d'histoire*, Bruxelles 1964, p. 14; J. Balty, *La grande mosaïque de chasse des Musées royaux d'art et d'histoire et sa datation*, [in:] *Colloque Apamée de Syrie…*, p. 131; J.Ch. Balty, *Palais et maisons d'Apamée*, [in:] *Les maisons dans la Syrie antique du III^e millénaire aux débouts de l'islam. Pratiques et représentations de l'espace domestique. Actes du colloque International (Damas, 27–30 juin 1992)*, éd. C. Castel, M. Al-Maqdisi, F. Villeneuve, Beyrouth 1997, p. 283–295; idem, *Apamée: Mutations et permanences de l'espace urbain, de la fondation hellénistique à la ville romano-byzantine*, BEO 52, 2000, p. 179–180.

[13] *Synekdèmos*, p. 40; *Descriptio*, p. 63.

[14] For more on the circumstances and the chronology of the establishment of this province see P. Filipczak, *The Imperial Administration in Syria during the Reign of Diocletian and Constantine the Great. The Problem of Establishment of the Province Euphratensia*, [in:] *Saint Emperor Constantine and Christianity. Proceedings of International Conference Commemorating the 1700th Anniversary of the Edict of Milan*, ed. D. Bojanovic, vol. I, Niš 2013, p. 217–227.

[15] *Barrington Atlas…*, p. 67, 102. Cf. also R. Dussaud, *Topographie…*, p. 447–480.

[16] *Synekdèmos*, p. 40; *Descriptio*, p. 63. Cf. also *CIC, Novellae*, VIII (*praeses*).

[17] G. Goossens, *Hiérapolis de Syrie. Essai de monographie historique*, Louvain 1943, p. 107.

lis, Syria – it is possible that this region is one of north-eastern Syria inhabited by the Arabs *Skenitai*), Salton Erazigenon/Salgenoratixenon (Abu Hanaya, Syria), Syrima (or Ourima, the identification of the city is uncertain, it is sometimes identified either with the ancient Antioch on the Euphrates, Syria) and Europos (Jerablous/Cerablus, also Carchemish, Turkey)[18].

Theodorias. The province of *Theodorias* comprised a territory taken from the earlier provinces of Syria Prima and Syria Secunda. Carved out from Syria Prima were the two coastal cities of Paltus and Gabala, as well as Laodicea – located in the interior part of the country and elevated to the position of the capital of the new province. The city of Balanea, also incorporated into the new province, was detached from Syria Secunda. *Theodorias* stretched over a narrow strip of coast lying at the foot of the Bargylus mountains[19]. *Synekdèmos* and Malalas do not inform us of the exact rank of the governor of the province[20], but in the Novel VIII he is described as *consular*[21]; it is not possible to identify government buildings on the ancient city's plan, nor can any such constructions be found among monuments that survive to this day[22].

Phoenice/Phoenice Paralia. The province Phoenicia (*Phoenice*), once also known as Phoenician Syria (*Syria Phoenice*), was established during the reign of Septimius Severus. At this time it was a large administrative district which, in addition to the coastal area of Phoenicia proper, also covered an area of central and eastern Syria[23]. In the reign of Diocletian, the province was divided into two smaller ones: *Augusta Libanensis*, occupying the central and eastern part of Syria, and *Phoenice* encompassing the coastal territory[24]. The reign of Theodosius I brought with it a change in the name of both administrative units, leaving their respective territories intact. The first province became Phoenicia Lebanese (*Phoenice Libanensis*) and the second became Phoenicia Maritime (*Phoenice Maritima*). This division continued until the reign of Justinian I, but sources from the period usually refer to *Phoenicia Maritima* as *Phoenicia Paralia*[25] or

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18 *Synekdèmos...*, p. 40; *Descriptio*, p. 63. Cf. R. Dussaud, *Topographie...*, p. 126–136.

19 *Barrington Atlas...*, p. 68.

20 John Malalas, XVIII, 39; *Descriptio*, p. 63.

21 *CIC*, *Novellae*, VIII.

22 J. Sauvaget, *Le plan de Laodicée-sur-Mer*, BEO 4, 1934, p. 81–114. J.-P. Rey-Coquais indicates a significant role of the harbour, see *Laodicée-sur-mer et l'armée romaine. À partir de quelques inscriptions*, [in:] *The Roman and Byzantine Army in the East. Proceedings of a Colloqium Held at the Jagiellonian University, Kraków in September 1992*, ed. E. Dąbrowa, Kraków 1994, p. 149–163.

23 J.-P. Rey-Coquais, *Syrie romaine de Pompee à Diocletien*, JRS 68, 1978, p. 61–62.

24 *Ibidem*, p. 62.

25 *Descriptio*, p. 66.

simply *Phoenicia* (*Phoenice*)[26]. The province extended along the Mediterranean coast, between Tyre (Es-Sur, Lebanon) in the north and Arad (Arwad, Syria) in the south[27].

The province, with Tyre as its capital, was governed by a *consularis*[28]. Scholarly literature provides no information about where he resided, or where local government buildings were located[29]. It can only be presumed that these buildings were situated within the so-called imperial city, that is, in a district which lay in the southern part of Tyre (in the area known as the Egyptian harbour). An alley flanked with columns led to this district, and thermal baths and public buildings were located in its vicinity[30]. As in the rest of the Empire, the city's political life was centred here around the hippodrome. Its impressive ruins survive to this day in the eastern part of the city, the best preserved of which is the southern part of the hippodrome, encompassing its main entrance and the stands for local officials[31].

The province of Phoenicia comprised the following cities: Ptolemais (Acre, Israel), Sidon (Saida, Lebanon), Berytus (Beirut, Lebanon), Byblos (Jbeil, Lebanon), Botrys (Batrun, Lebanon), Tripolis (Tripoli/Tarabulus, Lebanon), Arca (Arqa, Lebanon), Orthosia (Ard Artousi, Lebanon), Antarados (Tartus, Syria), Constantia (identified as Antarados), Pogonas (its location remains unidentified – it may have been Gun/Dijon, near Akka) and Paneas (also known as Caesarea Philippi, today Banias, Israel)[32].

Phoenicia Lebanese (*Phoenice Libanensis*). This administrative unit was established during the reign of Theodosius I (379–395) replacing the province *Augusta Libanensis*. It encompassed the territory of the Bekaa valley, the Anti-Lebanon mountain range along with the Hermon mountain massif, the valley of the river Barada and the Damascus oasis, the western banks of Lake Tiberias and the vast open spaces of the Syrian Desert[33].

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[26] *Synekdèmos*, p. 40.

[27] *Barrington Atlas...*, p. 69, 102. Cf. R. D u s s a u d, *Topographie...*, p. 7–36.

[28] *Synekdèmos*, p. 40; *Descriptio*, p. 66. Cf. also *CIC*, *Novellae*, VIII.

[29] See a number of reports (*Chronique*) on the excavation work published by M. C h é c h a b in BMB 6, 1942–1943, p. 86; 8, 1946–1948, p. 160–161; 9, 1949–1950, p. 108; 18, 1965, p. 112–113) and the paper by this author *Tyr à l'époque romaine. Aspects de la cité à la lumière des textes et des fouilles*, MUSJ 38, 1962, p. 13–40. See also R. B u r n s, *Monuments of Syria. An Historical Guide*, London–New York 1999, p. 149–151.

[30] All of these spots can be clearly seen in the aerial photos of Tyre which were "imposed" on the plan of the ancient city. See N. J i d e j i a n, *Tyr à travers les ages*, transl. D. H a l a r d - J i d e j i a n, Beyrouth 1996 [two large black and white photos included prior to the title page].

[31] *Ibidem*, p. 188–195.

[32] *Synekdèmos*, p. 41; *Descriptio*, p. 66.

[33] *Barrington Atlas...*, p. 68, 69, 102. Cf. also R. D u s s a u d, *Topographie...*, p. 276–290.

According to Hierocles, the province was governed by a *praeses* who was based in Emesa (Homs, Syria)[34]. Edict IV issued by Justinian I (535/536) indicates that during his reign the governor of the province was bestowed with the title of moderator (*moderator Phoenices Libanensis*)[35]. The exact location of the governor's seat in Emesa is not specified in scholarly literature, although excavations carried out in the city in modern times have led to the identification of some of its ancient edifices[36].

In addition to Emesa, the province of Phoenicia Lebanese comprised the following cities: Laodicea ad Libanum (Tell Nebi Mend, Syria), Damascus (Syria), Heliopolis (Baalbek, Lebanon), Abila (or Abila Lysaniou, today Suq Le Basi Barada, Syria) and Palmyra (Tudmur, Syria)[37].

Palaestina Prima. The chronology of establishing new provinces in Byzantine Palestine is uncertain. *Palaestina Prima* was founded no later than during the reign of Theodosius I, that is, in the years 379–395 – at which time, a part of this province was detached and turned into a new separate administrative unit known as *Palaestina Secunda*[38]. *Palaestina Prima* must have been established after 314 (it is not mentioned on the so-called List of Verona, a list of Roman provinces dated to 314)[39] and before the end of Theodosius' rule[40]. At the time of

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[34] *Synekdèmos*, p. 41; John Malalas, XIII, 39; *Descriptio*, p. 66.

[35] *CIC*, *Edicta*, IV.

[36] H. Seyrig, *Antiquités syriennes*, *Antiquités de la nécropole d'Emèse (I^ère partie)*, Sy 29.3–4, 1952, p. 204–250; idem, *Antiquités syriennes. Antiquités de la nécropole d'Emèse*, Sy 30.1–2, p. 12–50; idem, *Antiquités syriennes. Caractères d'historie d'Emèse*, Sy 1959, 36.3–4, p. 184–192. See also R. Burns, *Monuments…*, p. 131–134.

[37] *Synekdèmos*, p. 41; *Descriptio*, p. 66.

[38] John Malalas, XIII, 42.

[39] C. Zuckerman, *Sur la liste de Vérone et la province de Grande Arménie, la division de l'empire et la date de création des diocèces*, [in:] V. Déroche, D. Feissel, C. Morrisson et al., *Mélanges Gilbert Dagron*, TM 14, 2002, p. 617–637.

[40] On the chronology of the establishment of the three Palestinian provinces see M. Avi-Yonah, *RE*, Suppl. XIII, col. 415–416 [s.v. *Palaestina* – ca. 400]; K.G. Holum, *ODB* III, p. 1563 [s.v. *Palestine* – ca. 400]; Y. Tsafrir, *Introduction*, [in:] *TIR.IP*, p. 16 (around 400 AD); Cl. Dauphin, *La Palestine byzantine. Peuplement et Populations*, vol. I, *Texte*, Oxford 1998, p. 66 and H. Sivan, *Palestina in Late Antiquity*, Oxford 2008, p. 41–43 (409 AD); K. Butcher, *Roman Syria and the Near East*, Los Angeles 2003, p. 86 (the latter half of the fourth century); K.C. Gutwein, *Third Palestine…*, p. 6 (the first part of the fourth century). *Palaestina Tertia* appears in sources since the reign of Constantine the Great, who was to be its founder. However, it is thought today that Malalas, to whom we owe this information, relying on archaic language, used the name *Palaestina Tertia* (which existed in his days) with regard to *Palaestina Salutaris* which was actually brought into being during the reign of Constantine. The foundation of *Palaestina Tertia* should be dated to the reign of Theodosius the Great, see J. Balty, *Sur la date…*, p. 473–474; S. Métivier, *La creation des provinces romaines dans la*

Justinian, *Palaestina Prima* occupied a long strip of the coast, from Dor(a) (Burj et Tantura, Israel) to Bitylion (Sheik Zuweid, Egypt), and the largest Palestinian lands west of Jordan and the Dead Sea, that is, Samaria, Judea and western Idumea[41].

According to Hierocles, the province was governed by a *consularis* based in Caesarea Maritima (Qesaria; Qaisariya, Israel)[42]. Justinian's Novel CIII (from 1 July 536) indicates that from that year onwards this official held the title of proconsul (*proconsul Palaestinae*)[43].

The first Roman governors resided in Herod's former palace. It was a great residential complex located in the southern part of the city, near the coast and city walls. The proximity to the sea is likely to have had a destructive effect on the structure of these buildings. The next praetorium was erected in 77 or 78, and at the beginning of the fourth century it remained the seat of the governor. According to Joseph Patrich, it was not until city life in the southern part of Caesarea died down – which happened as a consequence of the Arab invasion in 640–641 – that the Byzantine praetorium fell out of use[44]. However, Patrich fails to mention whether the building was still used for administrative purposes.

Palaestina Prima comprised also the following cities: Antipatris (or Pegai; Ras el-Ain/Rosh Ha-Ayin, Israel), Diospolis (or Lydda; Lud, Israel), Azotos Paralios and Azotos Mesogeios (Ashdod, Israel), Eleutheropolis (Beth Govrin,

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Chronique de Malalas, [in:] *Recherches sur la Chronique de Jean Malalas II*, éd. S. Agusta-Boularot, J. Beaucamp, A.-M. Bernardi, E. Caire, Paris 2006, p. 162.

41 *TIR.IP* [map: *Iudaea. Palaestina: North*; see also Y. Tsafrir, *Introduction*, [in:] *TIR.IP*, p. 17 (figure 4)]; *Barrington Atlas...*, p. 69, 70, 102; *Atlas of Jordan. History, Territories and Society*, ed. M. Ababsa, Beyrouth 2013, p. 163. For more on historical geography of southern Syria nad Palestine, see two classic titles: F.M. Abel, *Géographie de la Palestine*, vol. I–II, Paris 1933–1938 and M. Avi-Yonah, *Holy Land from the Persian to the Arab Conquest (536 B.C. to A.D. 640): An Historical Geography*, Grand Rapids 1977.

42 *Synekdèmos*, p. 41; *Descriptio*, p. 66. Cf. also *CIC, Novellae*, VIII.

43 *CIC, Novellae*, CIII, 1 and 2. The proconsular dignity was bestowed only on governors of *Palaestina Prima*. Cf. B. Lifshitz, *Césarée de Palestine, son histoire et ses institutions*, ANRW II.8, p. 507, n. 90.

44 See J. Patrich, *Caesarea Maritima. The Provincial Capital of the Judaea Palaestina and its Praetoria*, [in:] *Abstracts of Roman Archaeology Conference*, Durham 1999, p. 26; idem, *A Government Compound in Roman-Byzantine Caesarea*, [in:] *Proceedings of the Twelfth World Congress of Jewish Studies. Division B. History of the Jewish People*, ed. R. Margolin, Jerusalem 2000, p. 35–44; idem, *Caesarea: the Palace of Roman Procurator and Byzantine Governor; Warehouses Complex and the Starting Gates of the Herodian Stadium*, JAEIBL 35 (124), 2002, p. 66–86; J. Patrich, *Studies in the Archaeology and History of Caesarea Maritima. Caput Judaeae, Metropolis Palaestinae*, Leyden 2011, p. 91–116, 205–224. See also the detailed list of the earlier publications on Cesaraea: *TIR.IP*, p. 95–96.

Israel), Aelia and Jerusalem (Jerusalem, Israel), Neapolis (Shechem/Nablus, Palestinian Autonomy), Sebaste (Sebastiya, Palestinian Autonomy), Antedon (or Agrippias; Teda, Palestinian Autonomy), Diocletianopolis (Khirbet Seraf, Israel), Sykomazon (probably Khirbet Suk Mazen, Palestinian Autonomy), Ono (Kafr Ana, Israel), Sozousa (Apollonia-Arsuf, Israel), Ioppe (Jaffa, Israel), Gaza (Gaza, Palestinian Autonomy), Raphia (Rafah/Tell es Sheikh Suleiman, Palestinian Autonomy/Egypt), Ascalon (Ashkelon, Israel) and Ariza/Gazara (Tell Jezer, Israel)[45].

Palaestina Secunda. Located within three historico-geographical regions: northern Samaria, western Galilee and northern Peraea, *Palaestina Secunda* was the smallest of all the Palestine provinces, encompassing, among others, the valley of the Hula river, the Jordan valley, and the terrains stretching around Tiberias Lake[46]. In Peraea, it occupied two historical regions: Decapolis and Gaulanitis (today Golan Heights).

The province was governed by a *praeses* or *consular* based in Scythopolis (or Nysa; Beisan Beth Shean, Israel)[47]. Excavation has made it possible to recreate the plan of this ancient city and to locate local administrative buildings. The Roman Basilica, which governors often used as a courtroom, was to be found a little north of a theatre, near to the porticos of the so-called Byzantine Agora[48]. The location of the governor's residence is unknown. The Odeon, a building which resembled a roofed theatre auditorium and hosted city council meetings, was dismantled in late antiquity following the institution's decline. Around the mid-sixth century, a large oval plaza, similar in appearance to that which survives in the nearby Geraza, was erected in its place[49].

In addition to Scythopolis, *Palaestina Secunda* comprised the following units (the cities and *komai*): Pella (Tabaqat Fahl, Jordan), Gadara (Umm Queis, Jordan), Abila (or Abila Dekapoleos, also Seleukeia; Tell Abil, Jordan), Kapitolias (Beyt er-Ras, Jordan), Hippos (Horvat Susita/Qal'at al-Husn, Israel),

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[45] *Synekdèmos*, p. 41–42; *Descriptio*, p. 66–67.

[46] *TIR.IP* [map: *Iudaea. Palaestina: North*; see also Y. T s a f r i r, *Introduction*, [in:] *TIR.IP*, p. 17 (figure 4)]; *Barrington Atlas*, p. 69, 102; *Atlas of Jordan…*, p. 163.

[47] *Synekdèmos*, p. 42; *Descriptio*, p. 67. Cf. also *CIC, Novellae*, VIII (the rank of governor – *consular*).

[48] Y. T s a f r i r, G. F o e r s t e r, *Urbanism at Scythopolis-Bet Shean in the Fourth to Seventh Centuries*, DOP 51, 1997, p. 85–146 (plan D, *Map of central area of Scythopolis – Bet Shean*). See also B. L i f s h i t z, *Scythopolis. L'histoire, les institutions et les cultes de la ville à l'époque hellénistique et imperiale*, ANRW II.8, p. 262–294.

[49] H. K e n n e d y, *Gerasa and Scythopolis: Power and Patronage in the Byzantine Cities of Bilad al-Sham*, BEO 52, 2000, p. 203. On Scythopolis, see detailed bibliography: *TIR.IP*, p. 223–225.

Tiberias (Tiberias, Israel), Helenoupolis (Kafr Kama, Israel), Diocaesarea/Sepphoris (Zippori/Saffuriye, Israel), Maximianopolis (Lejjun, Israel), Gaba (Jaba', Israel)[50], and Tetrakomia (the identification of its location is uncertain, it may be Qumya, Israel) and Nais *kome* (Nayin or Nain, Israel)[51].

Palaestina Tertia. In terms of the area it occupied, *Palaestina Tertia* was the largest Roman province in Palestine. It encompassed the territory of three historico-geographical zones: southern Idumea, Nabatea and Arabia. Lying within the boundaries of this administrative region was a great valley connecting the Red Sea to the Dead Sea, known as Wadi Araba, and almost the whole territory of the Negev Desert[52]. According to some scholars, the province encompassed almost the whole (except for its northern edge) of the Sinai Peninsula; this, however, is the hypothesis which, given the scant evidence that can be adduced in its support, requires further discussion[53].

The province was governed by a *praeses* based probably in Petra (Wadi Musa, Jordan)[54]. Various public buildings were situated in the vicinity of its colonnaded street (*cardo maximus*) – the city's main artery running along the Wadi Musa

[50] *Synekdèmos*, p. 42–43; *Descriptio*, p. 67–68.

[51] *Descriptio*, p. 68.

[52] *Barrington Atlas...*, p. 70, 71, 76, 102; *Atlas of Jordan...*, p. 163.

[53] Cf. P r o c o p i u s, *De Aedificiis*, V, 8; That there are very few sources allowing us to consider Sinai to have lain within the boundaries of Palaestina *Tertia* has recently been reminded by K. G u t w e i n (*Third Palestine...*, p. 22–24); the same author [*ibidem*, p. 16] provides the map of Palaestina *Tertia* which encompasses Sinai. The map is a reprint of maps from two older works: A. A l t, *Aus der Araba*, ZDPV 58, 1935, p. 1–59 oraz M. A v i - Y o n a h, *Map of Roman Palestine*, London 1940, p. 46; cf. Y. T s a f r i r, *The Transfer of the Negev, Sinai and Southern Tranjordan from „Arabia" to „Palaestina"*, IExJ 36, 1986, p. 77–86; I d e m, *Introduction*, [in:] *TIR.IP,* p. 17–18 (figure 4); also H. S i v a n, *Palestina...,* p. 86–87 (annexation of the Sinai pennisula to Palestina *Tertia* dated, probably, on c. 400) and W.D. W a r d, *From Provincia Arabia to Palaestina Tertia: The Impact of Geography, Economy, and Religion on Sedentary and Nomadic Communities in the Later Roman Province of Third Palestine*, Los Angeles 2008 (diss.), p. 68–69. *Contra*: Cl. D a u p h i n, *La Palestine byzantine...*, vol. I, 66.

[54] *Synekdèmos*, p. 43. Cf. also *CIC, Novellae*, VIII. Elusa was an administrative center of the province: L. C a s s o n, *The Administration of the Byzantine and early Arab Palestine*, Aeg 33, 1952, p. 54–60; Y. D a n, *Palaestina Salutaris (Tertia) and its capital*, IExJ 32.2/3, 1982, p. 134–137; Ph. M a y e r s o n, *The City of Elusa in the Literary Sources of the Fourth–Sixth Centuries*, IExJ, 33.3/4, 1983, p. 247–253; cf. also H. S i v a n, *Palestina...,* p. 41–43 ("Petra/Halusa" as a capital of Palestina *Tertia*). *Contra*: Z.T. F i e m a, *Petra and Its Hinterland during the Byzantine Period: New Research and Interpretations*, [in:] *Roman and Byzantine Near East: Some New Discoveries III*, JRA 49, 2002, Suppl. Series, p. 213; cf. also Y. T s a f r i r, *Introduction*, [in:] *TIR.IP*, p. 18 (*Petra as its capital and the city of Elusa as a secondary center in the Negev*); K. G u t w e i n (*Third Palestine...*, p. 10: *The site of the provincial capital of Palestina Tertia is shrouded in uncertainty*).

valley, between the heights of Jebel and Al Habis. Located near the Great Temple was a theatron identified as being either a sacred place, or more likely an odeon or the seat of the city (bouleutērion; βουλευτήριον). However, none of the identified public buildings date from after the third century AD. The state administrative buildings remain unidentified. It cannot be ruled out that in Petra, just as in the remaining cities of the region, public edifices, built and maintained by the local or state authorities (*cardo* and other monumental constructions adjacent to it), began to fall into ruin in the fifth century at the latest (in Petra this process began with the earthquake in 363). Recent archaeological research indicates that at the beginning of the seventh century there were just a few isolated areas of the city (*cardo* and some places situated around a few churches) which were still inhabited[55].

As well as Petra, *Palaestina Tertia* comprised the following cities and regions: Augustopolis (or Adrou; Udruh, Jordan), Arindela (Gharandal, Jordan), Characmoba (Kerak, Jordan), Areopolis (er-Rabba, Jordan), Soar (or Zoara; Ghor es-Safi, Jordan), Mampsis (Mamshit/Kurnub, Israel), Betthorus (the identification of its location is uncertain, El-Lajjun, Jordan), Elousa (Haluza/Khalasa, Israel), the area called Salton (in *Synekdèmos*) or Salton ἱερατικόν (in *Descriptio*) (probably Saltus Gerariticus; the identification of this imperial estate is uncertain, north-western part of the Negev Desert, Israel)[56], and two other centres: Berosaba (Beer Sheva/Bir es Saba, Israel), Ayla (or Aelena; Aqaba, Jordan) and Mamopsara (Buseira, Jordan), as well as two regions: Pentakomia (Fandaqumiyya, Israel) and Metrokomia (the location of which is unknown[57])[58].

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[55] Z.T. F i e m a, *Petra and Its Hinterland...*, p. 191–252 (especially p. 213–217); i d e m, *Roman Petra (106–363 AD). A Neglected Subject*, ZDPV 119.1, 2003, p. 38–58 (especially p. 48–49); i d e m, *City and Countryside in Byzantine Palestine. Prosperity in Question*, [in:] *Settlements and Demography in the Near East in Late Antiquity. Proceedings of the Colloquium in Matera (17–19 October 2005)*, ed. A.S. L e w i n, P. P e l l e g r i n i, Pisa–Roma 2006, p. 67–88; i d e m, *Remarks on Development and Significance of the Colonnaded Street in Petra, Jordan*, [in:] *La rue dans l'antiquité. Définition, Aménagement, Devenir. Actes du colloque de Poitiers (7–9 Septembre 2006)*, ed. P. B a l l e t, N. D i e u d o n n é-G l a d, C. S a l i o u, Rennes 2008, p. 161–168.

[56] *Synekdèmos*, p. 42–43; *Descriptio*, p. 68. For a description of the province see K. G u t w e i n, *Third Palestine...*, p. 21 (about Saltus Gerariticus as an independent imperial estate), 87–160 (historical geography of the province) and p. 161–228 (topography and urbanistics).

[57] According to F.M. A b e l (*Geographie...*, vol. II, p. 178) Metrokomia is identified as et-Tafile, but it is not sure (cf. *Descriptio...*, p. 68, with commenatry by Honigmann). For more on the *metrokomai* of Souther Syria, see M. S a r t r e, *Les metrokomai de Syrie du Sud*, Sy 76, 1999, p. 197–222.

[58] *Descriptio*, p. 68. According to Z.T. F i e m a (*Petra and his Hinterland...*, p. 213) the view suggesting that the southern parts of *Palaestina Tertia* (Petra itself, as well as the lands

Arabia. The province bearing this name was established in 106 following the conquest of the Nabatean Kingdom by Emperor Trajan (98–117)[59]. At that time it encompassed the Sinai Peninsula, the Negev Desert, Hauran and Hejaz[60]. It survived in this form until the reorganisation of provincial administration which took place at the end of the fourth century[61]. From then onwards all the lands lying to the south of the Dead Sea formed part of Palaestina Tertia, while Arabia was generally left in possession of the lands east of the Jordan river, that is, mainly Hejaz and Wadi Sirhan, the vast valley in the western part of the Arabian Peninsula[62].

According to Hierocles, Arabia was governed by a *consularis* based in Bostra (Busra ash-Sham, Syria)[63]. We know from the Novel CII, dated to 27 May 536, that from that year onwards this official was known by the title of moderator (*moderator Arabiae*)[64].

Despite some extensive archaeological works which have continued intermittently since the 1930s, attempts to identify conclusively the material remains of the praetorium have not been successful. It is likely that the so-called Trajan's Palace, situated in the south-eastern part of Bostra, would have been the first residence of the governor of the province. It must have been erected on the site of the still older residence of the Nabataean king, Rabbel II (at the turn of the first and second centuries AD). In some aspects, the architectural plan of Trajan's Palace and its interior decoration resemble the structure and design of another residential building found in Qasr ibn Wardan (from the sixth century, in central Syria) and the so-called Bishop's Palace in Bostra. However, further archaeological and epigraphical studies are required in order to confirm that Trajan's Palace was indeed the residence of the governor of the province[65].

A new *praetorium* was erected in Bostra in 490. The inscription recording this fact was discovered in the ruins of the building situated east of the thermae in the central part of the city, halfway between the thermae and Trajan's Palace.

located to the south of Wadi al Hasa) were *de facto* transferred under the governance of an Arab phylarch during – or after – mid-5th century (G.W. B o w e r s o c k, *Roman Arabia*, Cambridge 1993, p. 184–185) has no confirmation in the papyrological material found in Petra.

59 G.W. B o w e r s o c k, *Roman Arabia...*, p. 76.

60 *Atlas of Jordan...*, p. 142.

61 Cf. Ph. M a y e r s o n, *P. Oxy. 3574: Eleutheropolis of the New Arabia,* ZPE 53, 1983, p. 251–258 (the province, called *Nea Arabia*, was created at the end of 4th Century; we have no further information about this administrative unit).

62 *Barrington Atlas...*, p. 69, 71, 102; *Atlas of Jordan...*, p. 163.

63 *Synekdèmos*, p. 44. Cf. also CIC, *Novellae*, VIII (*praeses*).

64 CJC, *Novellae*, CII, 1.

65 M. S a r t r e, *Bostra, Des origines à l'Islam*, Paris 1985, p. 94.

It is hard to say whether this was the exact location of the *praetorium*. The inscription points to an entirely new edifice, erected from scratch. The reconstruction of both the appearance and the plan of the new praetorium is hypothetical only, based on an analogy to another building of this kind found in Resapha, central Syria. This *praetorium* was equipped with side rooms laid out in a square plan and covered with cylindrical vaults, whilst the central room was open air[66].

The province of Arabia comprised the following cities and regions: Adra(h)a (Dar'a, Syria), Dion (the identification of its location is uncertain – Tell As'ari, Jordan), Madaba (Madaba, Jordan), Gerasa (or Antiochia ad Chrysorhoam; Jerash, Jordan), Neue (Nawa, Syria), Philadelphia (Amman, Jordan), Neapol (the identification of its location is uncertain – Sulem, Syria), Hierapolis/Arra (el-Raha, Syria), Philippopolis (Shahba, Syria), Phaine (al-Mismiye, Syria), Constantia (or Constantine; its location is uncertain – Buraq, Syria), Dionysias (Suweda, Syria), Canatha (el-Qanawat, Syria), Nelkomia (or Neela; el-Mushennef, Syria), Hexakomia (its location is unknown)[67] and Esbous (Tell Hesban, Jordan), Tricomia (Salkhad, Syria), Saltus Batanaius (or Batanaia; Hauran, Syria), as well as Gonias *kome* (its location is uncertain – the region of the Golan Heights, Syria)[68].

The Diocese of the East

All of the provinces that have been discussed thus far were part of a greater administrative unit – the Diocese of the East (*dioecesis Orientis*). From its inception, during the reign of Constantine the Great, up until 535, it encompassed the lands lying between the Sinai Peninsula (beyond its north-west edge) and the south-east part of Asia Minor, and between the Mediterranean Sea (excluding Cyprus) and the Syrian Desert and the Nefud. To the south it bordered the Diocese of Egypt, to the north the Diocese of Pontus (*dioecesis Pontica* which was dissolved in 535 and then re-established in 548)[69] and the Diocese of Asia

[66] M. S a r t r e, *Bostra…*, p. 123–124; For more on the urbanism and topography of Bostra, see also monumental work by R. B r ü n n ow, A. von D o m a s z e w s k i, *Die Provinzia Arabia auf Grund zweier in den Jahren 1897 und 1898 unternommen Reisen und der Berichte früherer Reisender*, Strassburg 1909, vol. III p. 1–83.

[67] *Synekdèmos*, p. 44–45; *Descriptio*, p. 68.

[68] *Descriptio*, p. 68. A scholarly discussion of the issue of northern borders of ths province is presented in A. L e w i n, *The Organization of a Roman Territory: the southern section of Provincia Arabia*, [in:] *The Roman and Byzantine Army…*, p. 109–118.

[69] *CIC*, *Novellae*, VIII, 2 (the dissolution of the Diocese of Pontus); *CIC*, *Edicta*, VIII (the reestablishment of the Diocese of Pontus). See also J. W i e w i o r o w s k i, *Sądownictwo*

(*dioecesis Asiana* – which was dissolved in 535)[70]. The province was governed by a *comes Orientis* based in Syrian Antioch[71].

The seat of the governor of the province was based, as early as the reign of Constantine the Great, in the Temple of the Muses (*Museion*) which, it appears, automatically lost its sacral functions[72]. *Museion* was located near the agora which lay in the Epiphany quarter. This area was a short distance from the city centre, in the south-east part of Antioch, at the foot of Mount Silpius[73]. Significant evidence indicates that the governor's praetorium continued to be there until the beginning of the sixth century (it was burned down in July 507 during the fighting of circus factions) but we have no information directly concerning the building after 507[74].

Justinian's Novel VIII, dated to 15 April 535, redrew the borders of the Diocese of the East. This document reports the merger of two offices (*comes Orientis* and the governor of *Syria Prima*). In addition to the title of *comes Orientis*, the person exercising this function also held the honorary rank of *spectabilis*. In governing the territory of Syria Prima and Cyrrhestica (north-west Syria), this official continued to collect taxes and maintain public order[75]. However, under

późnorzymskich wikariuszy diecezji (Judicary of Diocesan Vicars in the Later Roman Empire), Poznań 2012, p. 276.

[70] *CIC*, *Novellae*, VIII, 1 (the dissolution of the Diocese of Asia).

[71] *Barrington Atlas...*, p. 102. For the issue of the origin of the office of the *comes* of the East see G. D o w n e y, *A Study of Comites Orientis et Consularis Syriae*, Princeton 1939, *passim*. For more on the subject of diocese system, including the prerogatives of the governors of this administrative unit see: J. W i e w i o r o w s k i, *Sądownictwo...*, p. 38–45 (with references to older literature).

[72] J o h n M a l a l a s, XIII, 4. O. M ü l l e r, *Antiquitates...*, p. 106; G. D o w n e y, *A History of Antioch...*, p. 355, 622.

[73] J o h n M a l a l a s, X, 10. O. M ü l l e r, *Antiquitates...*, p. 68, 91; G. D o w n e y, *A History of Antioch...*, p. 622–623.

[74] J o h n M a l a l a s, XVI, 6: the Basilica of Ruphinus, the Basilica of Zenodotus, the Basilica of Olbia and Double Tetrapylon were all destroyed during these riots (see: P. F i l i p c z a k, *Władze państwowe...*, p. 43). These are all buildings that are known to have been located near the agora in the district of Epiphany, or in its close vicinity. See: G. D o w n e y, *A History of Antioch...*, p. 630–631.

[75] *CIC*, *Novellae*, VIII, 5: Αὐτο δὲ τοῦτο φαμέν καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ λαμπροτάτου κόμητος τῆς ἑῴας καὶ τοῦ λαμπροτάτου ἀρχοντος. κἀκεῖσε γὰρ μίαν ἀρχὴν ἀμφοτέρας ποιούμεθα, ἔχοντος μὲν καί τὸ τοῦ περιβλέπτου κόμητος τῆς ἑῴας ὄνομα, τάξεως δὲ μιᾶς ἄρχοντος κομιτιανῆς οὔσης τε καὶ ὀνομαζομένης, καὶ τῆς πρώτης μόνης Συρίας καὶ τῶν Κυρρηστικῶν ἡγουμένου, καὶ τὰς ἑκατέρας ἀρχῆς ἔχοντος σιτήσεις. ἐν ἴσῳ γὰρ τοῖς βικαρίοις κἀκεῖνον τίθεμεν, ὥστε ἅμα καὶ αὐτὸν τῇ πειθομένῃ αὐτῷ τάξει κινδυνεύειν ὑπέρ τε τῆς τῶν δημοσίων εἰσπράξεως ὑπέρ τε τῆς πολιτικῆς καὶ δημοσίας καταστάσεως. On the location of Cyrrhestica see: E. F r é z o u l s, *Cyrrhus et la Cyrrhestique jusqu'à la fin du Haut-Empire*, ANRW II.8, p. 164–168.

the Novel CLVII, issued on 1 May 542, his authority was extended to include the area of Mesopotamia and Osrhoene in respect of enforcing the ban on marriages between colons from different land estates, including a duty to levy fines of three pounds of gold on owners disobeying this regulation[76].

Prefecture of the East

Consisting of a few dioceses, a prefecture was the largest administrative unit of the Empire. The Diocese of the East was part of a vast prefecture of the East (*praefectura praetorio Orientis*) which, according to recent research, was established in around 324. Governed by a prefect based in Constantinople, it encompassed the territory of the south east Balkans, Asia Minor, Syro-Palestine, north Mesopotamia, and north-east Africa[77]. As Syro-Palestine formed only a small part of it and the seat of its head was not located here, it does not warrant further investigation.

Conclusions. Generally, the administrative division existing in Syro-Palestine during the reign of Justinian I dated back to the era of the Dominate. However, the administrative structure – composed of provinces which functioned as its most basic elements making up the Diocese of the East, itself a part of a prefecture – was modified in two noticeable ways. The first modification was connected with the establishment of a new province, Theodorias, and the second with the extension of the jurisdiction of the governor of the Diocese of the East over new territories.

Amongst the great number of narrative sources describing the reign of Justinian I, only the chronicle of John Malalas contains information about the establishment of Theodorias. The new province was named after Justinian's wife,

[76] *CIC*, *Novellae*, CLVII, *prooimion*: ᾿Εκ τῶν εἰς ἡμας διαφόρως ἀνηνεγμένων πλημμελεῖσθαί τε κατὰ τὴν μέσην τῶν ποταμῶν καὶ πρός γε τὴν ᾿Οσροηνὴν ἐπαρχίαν ἐμάθομεν τῶν ἡμετέρων ἀνάξιον χρόνων. *CIC*, *Novellae*, CLVII, 1 (particular provisions); *CIC*, *Novellae*, CLVII, *epilogos* (obliging the *comes* of the East and his officials to observe the provisions of the *Novellae*).

[77] On the issue of the establishment of the system of prefectures see: Sz. O l s z a n i e c, *Powstanie i rozwój terytorialnych prefektur praetorio w okresie późnego Cesarstwa Rzymskiego – zarys problematyki* (*An Overview of the Emergence and Development of Territorial Praetorian Prefectures in the Late Roman Empire*), [in:] *Hortus Historiae. Księga pamiątkowa ku czci profesora Józefa Wolskiego w setną rocznicę urodzin*, ed. E. D ą b r o w a, M. D z i e l s k a, M. S a l a m o n, S. S p r a w s k i, Kraków 2010, p. 591–609. Earlier works on the subject can be found there, including the authoritative: J.-R. P a l a n q u e, *Essai sur la préfecture du prétoire du Bas-Empire*, Paris 1933 and W. E n s s l i n, *RE* XXII/2, col. 2426–2502 [s.v. *praefectus praetorio*].

Theodora. Malalas does not mention it directly, but elsewhere in his work he explicitly says that a Syrian fortress, Anasartha, had been renamed Theodorias, after the emperor's wife[78]. The analogy is therefore obvious. We know that Roman emperors developed a habit of replacing geographical or historical names, those of the cities or provinces in particular, with ones relating to their own names or to the names of their family members. Driven as much by these emperors' ambition as by political considerations, similar efforts were designed to boost the prestige of Roman emperors. Undertaken in praise of their reign or the reign of the line they represented, these name changes aimed to demonstrate the magnificence of the imperial family, strengthening the position of a given ruler or at least creating the impression that his power, newly won and precarious, was actually well-consolidated and undisputed[79]. Justinian I was no exception here. The establishment of Theodorias came either in 528 or 529, that is, at the outset of the joint rule of Justinian and Theodora who had risen to power in 527. Thus the decision to found the province in question may have been politically motivated. At that time, Justinian may have had in mind both the distaste with which court circles regarded Theodora's low social status, as well as the astonishment it aroused in his subjects. Immediately after his accession, he took consistent efforts to reinforce his wife's position, and the establishment of a new province bearing her name was merely the most conspicuous way in which he attempted to achieve this goal. The selection of the place may have had to do with the information concerning Theodora's Syrian origin. This aspect of the issue requires further examination[80].

The creation of Theodorias was not part of the reform of provincial administration which Justinian launched in 535, just a few years after the establishment of this province[81]. Moreover, the way it was created (it encompassed a small territory carved out of two other administrative units) was at odds with some of the basic principles adhered to in the implementation of the reform, which in-

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[78] John Malalas, XVIII, 31.

[79] Cf. D. Feissel, *L'empereur...*, p. 104. In North Africa Justinian founded a small city also named Theodrias (cf. A.H.M. Jones, *The Cities...*, p. 362); on the banks of the Danube river, he built a new fortress known as Theodora (cf. M. Fluss, *RE*, V (2R), col. 1773 [s.v. Theodora].

[80] Michael the Syrian, IX, 20 (vol. II, p. 189, ed. Chabot); cf. also B. Rubin, *Das Zeitalter Justinians*, Berlin 1960, vol. I, p. 99 (with references to older literature and with the conclusion that *Schon eher wäre an Syrien als Heimat der Familie zu denken. Wahrscheinlich kreutz sich griechisches und orientalisches Blut in den Adern der Theodora*).

[81] M. Meier, *Das andere Zeitalter Justinians. Kontingenzerfahrung und Kontingenzbewältigung im 6. Jahrhundert n. Chr*, Göttingen 2003, p. 226, note 631.

volved merging smaller units into bigger ones, elevating the rank of particular governors, and generally seeking to make the administration of the provinces less complicated[82].

The province that bore the name of Theodora covered a small area – it was probably the smallest administrative unit in the eastern part of the Empire. Wild and inaccessible, the Bargylus Mountains reached down to the coast, cutting the region into deep ravines, often flooded by the mountain brooks that flowed through them into the sea. In the whole province, there were only four cities and these, even taken together, played no significant role in either the political or economic life of the Empire[83]. The cities lacked harbours: in Paltos and Gabala boats were "moored" in a very primitive way, familiar throughout antiquity, which consisted of dragging boats onto the shore[84]. Only Laodicea, the largest of these cities, occupied an important position on the map of the Roman world, having a large and convenient sea harbour (it is supposed that there was also a second, smaller harbour in the city). In the first half of the 1930s, when a French scholar, Jean Sauvaget, tried to recreate the plan of the ancient Laodicea, it was still possible to see the remains of the harbour[85]. The city was severely damaged by a great earthquake, which, based on the account of Malalas, we can assume took place shortly before Justinian conferred metropolitan rights on the city[86].

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[82] Cf. J.B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire. From the death of Theodosius I to the death of Justinian*, vol. II, New York 1958, p. 338–346; A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire. A Social, Economy and Administrative Survey 284–602.*, vol. I, Oxford 1964, p. 280–281; Ch. Kelly, *Ruling the Later Roman Empire*, Cambridge – London 2004, *passim*, esp. p. 71–75; J. F. Haldon, *Economy and Administration: How did the Empire Work*, [in:] *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian*, ed. M. Maas, Cambridge 2006, p. 48–55; A. Gkoutzioukostas, M. Moniaros, *Η περιφερειακή διοικητική αναδιοργάνωση της αυτοκρατορίας από τον Ιουστινιανό Α'(527–565). Η περίπτωση της Quaestura Iustiniana Exercitus*, Thessalonike 2009, p. 36–56.

[83] On Gabala see: I. Benzinger, *RE* VII, col. 415 [s.v. *Gabala*]; J.-P. Rey-Coquais, *Arados et sa Pérée aux époques grecque, romaine et byzantine, Recueil des témoignages littéraires anciens, suivi de recherches sur les sites, l'histoire, la civilisation*, Paris 1974, p. 50, 66. On Paltos see: B. Spuler, *RE* XVIII/3, col. 280–281 [s.v. *Paltos*]; J.-P. Rey-Coquais, *Arados...*, p. 50, 81. On Balanea see: I. Benzinger, *RE* II, col. 2816–2817 [s.v. *Balanaia*]; J. Rey-Coquais, *Arados...*, p. 49, 63, 196. General information about the province Theodrias see E. Honigmann, *RE* V (2Reihe), col. 1803–1804 [s.v. *Θεοδωριὰς ἐπαρχία*]; M.M. Mango, *ODB* II, p. 2049 [s.v. Theodriada].

[84] J.-P. Rey-Coquais, *Arados et sa pérée...*, p. 81.

[85] J. Sauvaget, *Le plan...*, p. 98–99.

[86] John Malalas, XVIII, 28: the earthquake destroyed half the city, claiming 7500 casualties, mainly Jews whose synagogues also suffered severe damage. Most Christians survived,

According to John Bury, the Novel VIII deprived *comes Orientis* of the jurisdiction over the Diocese of the East and, while not depriving him of his former titles and rank, turned him into a civilian governor of the province *Syria Prima*[87]. Ernst Stein and Arnold Jones are also of the opinion that the Novel VIII reduced the role of *comes Orientis* to that of the governor of *Syria Prima*, although Jones argues that under the Novel CLVII *comes Orientis* actually regained the position he had held before the reform of 535[88]. In Polish historiography, a similar view has recently been expressed by Jacek Wiewiorowski according to whom *comes Orientis*' judicial powers were limited by the Novel VIII to the province of Syria (Prima) and then granted back, in some aspects, by the Novel CLVII[89]. To my knowledge, no present day scholar tries to interpret the Novel VIII as formally or substantially dissolving the Diocese of the East. As primary sources pertaining to the reign of Justin II, Tiberius II and Maurice offer no indication of any changes having been brought to the imperial administration with regard to provinces or dioceses, we have reason to believe that the Diocese of the East survived until the end of Byzantine rule over Syro-Palestine.

The Arabs seized most of the territory of the Diocese of the East, including its key regions, thus putting an end to its existence. For this reason, one cannot accept the view that it ceased to exist in the course of the seventh century, along with the disappearance of the Prefecture of the East and the introduction of the theme-based administrative division[90]. Certainly, the analysis of Byzantine sources yields no definite conclusions regarding the geographical shape of the Diocese in the period between the reforms of Justinian I and the loss of the territory to the Arabs (under the Novel VIII, *comes Orientis* is supposed to discharge his

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as did their churches. The authorities proceeded to rebuild the city. On Laodicea see: E. H o n i g m a n n, *RE* XII/1, col. 713–718 [s.v. *Laodikeia*]; J. S a u v a g e t, *Le plan...*, p. 81–114; E. W i l l, *Damas antique*, Sy 71, 1994, p. 1–43.

87 J.B. B u r y, *History of the Later Roman Empire from the death of Theodosius I to the death of Justinian*, vol. II, New York 1958, p. 339.

88 See, for example, E. S t e i n, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, vol. II, *De la disparition de l'empire d'occident à la mort de Justinien (476–565)*, Paris–Bruxelles–Amsterdam 1949, p. 465; A.H.M. J o n e s, *The Later...*, vol. II, p. 374.

89 J. W i e w i o r o w s k i, *Sądownictwo...*, p. 272, 274–276. See also: R. B o n i n i, *Ricerche sulla legislazione giustinianea dell'anno 535. Nov. Justiniani 8: Venalita delle cariche e riforme dell'amministrazione periferica*, Bologna 1976; i d e m, *Note sulla legislazione Giustinianea dell'anno 535*, [in:] *L'imperatore Giustiniano, storia e mito. Giornate di studio a Ravenna 14–16 otobre 1976*, ed. G.W. A r c h i, Milano 1978, p. 161–178; i d e m, *L'ultima legislazione pubblicistica di Giustiniano (543–565)*, [in:] *Il mondo del diritto nel'epoca giustinianea: caratteri e problematiche*, Ravenna 1985, p. 139–171.

90 M.M. M a n g o, *ODB* III, p. 1533–1534 [s.v. *Oriens*].

duties only within the administrative boundaries of Syria Prima and Cyrrhestica, while the enactment of the Novel CLVII charge him with exercising part of his judicial functions in Mesopotamia and Osrhoene).

For how long did the region of Syro-Palestine remain divided into ten provinces? There is no evidence that during the reign of Justinian's successors the number of provinces was either reduced or increased or that any serious changes, reflected in the primary sources, were brought to the administrative geography of the region. Thus the view that the administrative division of Syro-Palestine, as introduced by Justinian I, was preserved until the conquest of this territory by Persia is based on the argument *ex silentio*. However, that is the only kind of argument to which we can resort here.

Part II
The territorial division of the military administration

Notitia Dignitatum, a document dating from the beginning of the fifth century, remains our main source of knowledge of the location of provincial garrisons placed under the command of military leaders holding the title of *dux*. The parts pertaining to these leaders contain the schematic maps of the regions to which they were assigned. These maps also show the deployment of particular garrisons. Under every drawing there is a list which, in addition to giving the names of military units, also indicates their location. According to recent calculations presented by Constantin Zuckerman with regard to the eastern part of the Empire, the source mentions a total of 336 Roman garrisons stationed along Roman borders, of which 95 were deployed in Syro-Palestine[91]. Below I provide the list of only larger units called *equites* (marked on the schematic maps of *Notitia Dignitatium* and included in the list mentioned above[92]).

[91] C. Zuckerman, *L'armée*, [in:] *Le monde byzantin.* Tome 1 – *L'Empire romain d'Orient 330–641*, éd. C. Morrisson et al., ^{2}Paris 2006, p. 145.

[92] Of course, there is also a possibility, not taken into consideration in this sketch, to analyze the maps for troops stationing; this issue, however, and similarly other problems referring to the specific group of iconographic sources, arouse increasing interest of contemporary scholars – cf. J. Wiewiorowski, *Szczegóły geograficzne w Notitia Digntatum in partibus Orientis (Geographical Details in the Notitia Dignitatum in Partibus Orientis*), USS 12, 2013, p. 149–181 (with references to older literature).

1. The dux of Palestine (*dux Palaestinae*) was in command of the troops stationed in the following places: Menoeis [Menoida] (Nirim/Khirbet Ma'in, Israel), Sabaia (Apameia's surroundings, Syria), Zodocatha (Khirbet es-Sadaqa, Jordan), Hauara (Khirbet al-Khaldeh, Jordan), Robotha [Robatha], Moabila [Moahila] (Qasr Mahalle, Jordan), Veterocaria [Veterocania], Aila (Aqaba, Jordan), Beersheba (Bir es Saba [Sabbia], Israel), Zoara (Ghor es-Safi, Syria), Chermula, Birsama (Horvat Beer Shema, Israel), Aelia (Jerusalem, Israel)[93].

2. The dux of Arabia (*dux Arabiae*) was in charge of the troops posted in the following places: Animotha/Motha (Imtan, Syria), Tricomia, Ziza (settlement and cementary, Jordan), Areopolis (er-Rabba, Jordan), Speluncis, Mefa, Gadda (El-Hadid, Jordan), Bostra (Busra esh-Sham, Syria), Betthora (El-Lejjun, Jordan), Diafenes[94].

3. The dux of Phoenicia (*dux Phoenices*) was in command of the troops stationed in the following places: Otthara (probably Ghunthur, Syria), Euhara, Saltatha (probably Sarepta/Makra Kome, today Sarafend, Liban) Lataui, Auatha, Nazala (Qaryateyn, Syria), Abina, Casama (An-Nabk, Syria), Calamona (south of Tripolis, Liban) Betproclis (Furqlus, Syria), Thelsbae [Thelsee] (Dmeir, Syria), Adatha (probably Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi, Syria) and Palmyra (Tadmur, Syria)[95].

4. The dux of Syria and Euphratesia (*dux Syriae*) commanded troops based in such places as: Occariba (or Occaraba; 'Agerbat, Syria), Seriana [Seriane] (Isriye, Syria), Barbalissus (Balis/Meskene, Syria), Neocaesaria (or Athis; Dibsi Faraj, Syria), Matthana (or Mattana), Adada (Sukhneh, Syria), Rosapha [Rosafa] (Sergiopolis; Resapha, Syria), Sura (or Soura; Sourriya, Syria), Anatha (or Aracha; Erek, Syria), Acadama (Qdeym, Syria), Acauatha, Oresa (or Oruba, Oriza; Tayibe, Syria)[96].

The division of the Empire into military districts did not correspond to the arrangement of the units of civilian administration – the area divided into four military commands, remaining under the control of duces, comprised ten civilian provinces. This division must have existed already at the time of creating *Notitia Dignitatum*, that is, at the beginning of the fifth century. However,

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[93] *ND*, Or., XXIX, ed. B ö c k i n g (=*ND*, Or. XXXIV, ed. S e e c k; [ND*,* Or. XXXII, ed. F a l e i r o]).

[94] *ND*, Or., XXX, ed. B ö c k i n g (=*ND*, Or. XXXVII, ed. S e e c k; [*ND,* Or. XXXIII, ed. F a l e i r o]).

[95] *ND*, Or., XXXI, ed. B ö c k i n g (=*ND,* Or. XXXII, ed. S e e c k; [*ND,* Or. XXXIV, ed. F a l e i r o]).

[96] *ND*, Or., XXXII, ed. B ö c k i n g (=*ND*, Or. XXXIII, ed. S e e c k; [*ND,* Or. XXXV, ed. F a l e i r o]).

there is no certainty as to how long it functioned in the form presented in this document. According to Ernst Stein, the autumn of 527 saw changes brought about in the military organisation of the Byzantine East which involved, among other things, the division of Phoenicia Lebanese into two military zones administered by two commanders residing respectively in Palmyra and Damascus[97]. Stein's view is based on the accounts of John Malalas and Procopius of Caesarea from whom we learn about a number of facts such as dispatching Roman troops to Palmyra, reinforcing the city's defensive infrastructure or placing the dux of Emesa under obligation to defend Roman territories at the longitude of Jerusalem. Both historians also mention the former dux of Damascus' intervention against the Persians[98]. The information they provide testifies to the reinforcement of Byzantium's military presence in Syro-Palestine (mainly in Palmyra) and actually points to the introduction of some changes to the system of the region's military administration (both authors mention the duces of Damascus and Emesa who are absent from *Notitia Dignitatum* and treat a civilian province – Phoenicia Lebanese – as a unit of military administration).

The location of military posts mentioned in *Notitia Dignitatum*, scattered across different parts of the regions, indicate that there was no clear border separating the Byzantine Syro-Palestine (especially Arabia and Palestine) from the exterior territory inhabited by the nomadic Arabs. The border of the Empire did not run here along any clearly outlined element of landscape such as a river or mountains, since these were absent from the region. It was a vast, militarised zone, made up of a number of posts, different in size (the large ones called *castrum* or *praesidum*, the smaller referred to as *castella* and watch towers – *turris*) and situated along communication routes or at the points at which it was possible to keep military garrisons supplied with food and water[99].

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[97] E. Stein, *Histoire…*, p. 289.

[98] John Malalas, XVIII, 2; XVIII, 26; Procopius, *De Aedificiis*, II, 11, 10–12. See also: M. Barański, *The Roman Army in Palmyra: A Case of Adaptation of a Pre-Existing City*, [in:] *The Roman and Byzantine Army…*, p. 9–17 (including earlier literature on military infrastructure in Palmyra).

[99] For a general discussion of the issues connected with the limes, see, first of all, the proceedings of the international congresses of *Roman Frontier Studies*, published in many volumes since the year 1952. Regarding the limes Syro-Palestine, cf. A. Poidebard, *Le trace de Rome dans le désert. Le limes de Trajan à la conquète arabe. Recherches aèriennes (1925–1932). Texte*, Paris 1934; R. Mouterde, A. Poidebard, *Le Limes de Chalcis. Organisation de steppe en Haute Syrie Romaine. Documents aériens et épigraphiques. Texte*, Paris 1945; S.Th. Parker, *Romans and Saracens. A History of Arabian Frontier*, Winona Lake 1986, mainly p. 135–156; Ph. Mayerson, *The Saracens and the Limes*, BASOR 262, 1986, p. 35–47;

The view held in older literature was that the whole defence system organised in Syro-Palestine on the frontier with the Arabs continued to operate as late as the seventh century[100]. In recent scholarship, however, this system is believed to have stopped functioning in the fifth and sixth centuries, being entirely out of existence during the reign of Emperor Heraclius. Reports on archaeological fieldwork carried out, among others, in the years 1980–1980 under the so-called *Limes Arabicus Project*, indicate that most fortified sites were abandoned between 500 and 550[101].

Our data on the number and location of military units are scarce and uncertain. It provides no basis for drawing any definite conclusions about a total number of Byzantine troops in Syro-Palestine. During the reign of Justinian, in Syro–Palestine, dukes were stationed in Constantia/Dara, Edessa, Zenobia, Circesium, Palmyra, Damascus, Bostra and Ceasarea[102]. According to cautious calculations presented recently by Walter Emil Kaegi, in the first half of seventh century a total number of Byzantine armed forces oscillated between 100 and

idem, *A Note on the Roman Limes: Inner versus Outer*, IExJ 38, 1988, p. 181–183; B. Isaac, *The Limits of the Empire. The Roman Army in the East*, Oxford 1990, mainly p. 372–418 (on the frontier defense system and its concept), p. 427–439 (military bases in Judea, the role of Antioch); *The Roman Army in the East*, ed. H. Kennedy, Ann Arbor 1996 [= JRS. Suppl. Series 18]; *The Defence of Roman and Byzantine East. Proceedings of the colloquium held at the University of Sheffield in April 1986*, ed. Ph. Freeman, D. Kennedy, Oxford 1986 [BAR. Int. Series 297(i)]; C. Zuckerman, *L'armée*, [in:] *Le monde byzantin. Tome 1 – L'Empire romain d'Orient 330–641*, éd. C. Morrisson et al., [2]Paris 2006, p. 144–147; 159–161; for the abridged bibliography on the whole eastern limes see: M.A. Casanova, A. Egea Vivancos, *Selección bibliográfica...*, p. 46–49.

[100] See: A. Alt, *Beiträge zur historischen Geographie und Topographie des Negeb*, vol. V, *Das Ende des Limes Palastinae*, JPOS 18, 1938, p. 149–160; Idem, *Der Limes Palaestinae im sechsten und siebenten Jahrhundert nach Chr.*, ZDPV 63, 1940, p. 129–142.

[101] *The Roman Frontier in Central Jordan. Final Report on the Limes Arabicus Project (1980–1989)*, ed. S.Th. Parker, vol. I–II, Washington 2006 [=*Dumbarton Oaks Studies*, 40] (both volumes are devoted to el-Lejjun; vol. II, p. 517–572 – a summary of historical debates on the whole limes).

[102] G. Greatrex, *Dukes of eastern frontier of the empire*, [in:] *Wolf Liebeschuetz Reflected. Essays presented by colleagues, friends and pupils*, ed. J. Drinkwater, B. Salway, London 2007, p. 93. On localisation of Roman troops in Syria in the Later Roman Empire see also N. Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities and Civilians in Roman Syria*, Ann Arbor 2004, p. 69–81, 285–303. Among many detailed studies, devoted to particular places, it is worth mentioning at least two monumental books: J. Lauffray, *Halabiyya-Zénobia. Place forte du limes oriental et la haute Mésopotamie au VIe siècle*, t. 1, *Les duchés frontaliers de Mésopotamie et les fortifications de Zénobia*, Paris 1983; t. 2, *L'architecture publique, privée et funéraire*, Paris 1991 and M. Konrad, *Resafa V. Der Spätrömischer Limes in Syrien. Archäologische Untersuchungen an den Grenzkastellen von Sura, Tetrapyrgium, Cholle und in Resafa*, mit Beiträgen von H.R. Baldus, T. Ulbert, Mainz 2001.

130 hundred thousand soldiers, with about 50 thousand serving in the East. And only half of this last group presented real combat value (these were the soldiers serving under the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the East, *magister militum per Orientem*). The financial difficulties with which the state struggled at the end of the war with Persia may have further diminished this value. And leaving aside the combat value of particular units, their very number was not adequate to meet the Empire's defence needs[103].

In the area of three Palestinian provinces and of Arabia, the posts of the regular Roman army were probably established at a large distance from each other, in some isolated points, and their garrisons were small in number. The largest of them was probably based in Caesarea and consisted of 200 to 300 soldiers. Individual cities could maintain garrisons equal in size to a *numerus* unit, that is, those which comprised from 100 to 500 soldiers. Smaller garrisons, quartered on both sides of the Dead Sea and the river Jordan, numbered about 100 to 200 soldiers. Passive and of average military quality, these troops had no full combat experience, performing well only as border guards or as defenders of heavily fortified sites. It was also very difficult to coordinate the operation of these "scattered" garrisons at the moment of a real threat from abroad. The most numerous units are believed to have been stationed in northern Syria and in northern Mesopotamia. The garrison of up to 1500 soldiers was located in or around Antioch. A significantly smaller unit, 500 soldiers in number, was based in Chalcis ad Belum. The troops deployed in north-east Syria and northern Mesopotamia may have numbered several thousand soldiers. Byzantine garrisons are likely to have been maintained in: Callinicum on the Euphrates, Nisibis, Dara, Edessa, Zeugma, Hierapolis and Beroia. Smaller units, 100 soldiers in number, may have also been located near the camps of Arab Christians, Byzantium's allies. The garrisons of Arab allies must have been similar in number – 100 or a little more than 100 soldiers[104].

The best Roman units, stationed in the region of Constantinople – that is, at a distance of 1600 kilometres from the areas penetrated by the Arabs – were not sent to fight in Syria. Shifting these troops to the region of hostilities must have been regarded as too expensive and too time-consuming. It is impossible to say how adept the officials of the Prefecture of the East were at moving a great number of people (and animals) along the important route which ran from Anatolia, and from Melitene, to Emesa and Damascus and further afield to southern Syria[105].

[103] W.E. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquest*, Cambridge 1992, p. 40–41.
[104] *Ibidem*, p. 41–42.
[105] *Ibidem*, p. 43.

Logistic problems, and resistance likely to be encountered from local population, were further reasons which prevented Constantinople authorities from attempting to transfer large military contingents. The organisation of new troops (which required a large investment of time and money – for example, on training) could have disrupted the existing structures of economic and social life in rural areas. That is why it was easier to pay the Arab allies, operating on the spot and having excellent knowledge of both the territory and the strategy employed by the Muslims, than to create new units[106].

[106] *Ibidem*, p. 42–43, 52.

CHAPTER

II

People[1]

Governors of provinces

Bassus, a governor of *Palaestina Secunda*
529

In the chronicle of John Malalas, Bassus appears under the general term of archon. This chronicle is the only source which mentions this official. He was removed from office and sentenced to death by Justinian I, displeased with the situation in Scythopolis – a city which, in June 529, saw the outbreak of the fighting between the Christian, Jewish and Samaritan population. A significant part of this city was destroyed in the fires started by the Samaritans[2].

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[1] Technical note: question marks that accompany particular titles, written in Latin, signify doubts concerning the exact identification of a post held by a given person. A question mark that follows the name of an office signifies a possible identification of the office; a question mark that follows a geographical name signifies a hypothetical ascription of the post held to a given administrative unit.

[2] John Malalas, XVIII, 35: καὶ τοῦτο ἀκούσας ὁ αὐτὸς βασιλεὺς ἠγανάκτησε κατὰ τοῦ ἄρχοντος Βάσσου ὅντινα διαεξάμενος ἀπεκεφάλισεν ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ χώρᾳ.

In Greek texts the term "archon" (ἄρχων) is used to denote a governor of a province in general, referring to no specific rank the latter might hold. Only rarely does it, says Hugh Mason, apply to the presidents of provinces (*praesides provinciae*), the lowest ranking governors[3]. As we know, the head of *Palaestina Secunda* is referred to in *Synekdèmos* as "hegemon" (ἡγεμών), which may also mean a governor of any rank (although it is true that H. Mason managed to identify a group of hegemons-presidents who served as heads of particular provinces). The association by Martindale of this term with the office of the president of Palestine is only hypothetical[4].

The knowledge of the way in which Byzantine rulers reacted to such events as a rebellion also supports the identification of the archon of Scythopolis as the provincial governor of *Palaestina Secunda*, of which the city was the capital. The dismissal of a public servant who, while holding his post in a province (or in a diocese), was unable to keep the situation there under control, was a step ordinarily taken by the rulers of the time[5].

Anonymous governor of *Palaestina Prima*
[Anonymus, *consularis*? *Palaestinae Primae*?]
c. 530–531

Palestine's anonymous prefect was obliged by Emperor Justinian I to hand over sums raised through taxation to the emperor's emissary whom the ruler ordered to finance the reconstruction of the churches destroyed during the rebellion staged by the Samaritans. Drawing on the means from the prefect, the imperial legate, also an anonymous figure, carried out the reconstruction of the destroyed churches in Jerusalem (where a hospital was also built) and Bethlehem[6].

The source which informs us of these events is late, originating from the tenth century. Written originally in Arabic, it was translated into Latin in mid-sev-

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[3] H.J. Mason, *Greek Terms for Roman Institutions. A Lexicon and Analysys*, Toronto 1974, p. 111–112. See also: *A Greek English Lexicon*, ed. H.G. Liddell, R. Scott et al., Oxford 1996, p. 254 [s.v. ἀρχων].

[4] *PLRE* IIIA, p. 177 [*Bassus 1*].

[5] P. Filipczak, *Władze państwowe wobec zamieszek fakcji cyrkowych w Antiochii w świetle Kroniki Jana Malalasa (State Authorities towards Factional Unrest in Antioch in the Light of the Chronicle of John Malalas)*, PZH 2004, 6, p. 35–49.

[6] Eutychius, col. 1070 (ed. J.-P. Migne): *Misitque eum in finem imperator una cum ipso legatum, multi instructum opibus, scriptsitque ad Palaestinae praefectum, ut Palaestinae tributum legato traderet ad ea quae ipsi in mandatis dederat imperator exstruenda* [=ed. B. Pirone, XVII, 3, p. 293: *Scrisse poi al suo prefetto della Palestina ordinandogli di consegnare al messagero il ricavato del kharāğ della Palestina con cui farcostruite quanto il regli aveva ordinato*].

enteenth century, which explains why, in referring to a governor of a province, it uses an imprecise and anachronistic term – *praefectus*. The identification of the office, hypothetical, is based on a remark found in *Synekdèmos* in which, as I have mentioned, the governors of *Palaestina Prima* are addressed as consulares. It was not until 1 July 536 that, under the Novel CIII, they were bestowed with the higher title of proconsuls (*proconsules*)[7].

The geographic designation of the province is also imprecise, as it applies to Palestine understood as a historico-geographical region and not as an administrative unit. The information concerning the churches rebuilt in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, that is, in the cities located in the territory of *Palaestina Prima*; the fact that Nablus, a city which also lay within the province (where the Samaritans proclaimed their own king) became the epicentre of the Samaritan uprising; and that the fighting may also have broken out in Caesarea, a capital of the province, all seem to speak in favour of the identification of this prefect as the governor of *Palaestina Prima*.

The chronology concerning the holding of the office of governor by this prefect can be determined only approximately and through reference to the historical context. The reconstruction of the churches burned by the Samaritans must have taken place after suppressing their uprising, that is, in the latter half of 530. Holding of the office by the person under discussion should be dated to this year at the earliest, or, which is even more likely, to the year of 531[8].

Flavius Anastasius, dux and governor of Arabia
[Flavius Anastasius, *dux et praeses Arabiae*]
c. 533

We derive information about this person from two, fragmentarily preserved and similar in content, foundation inscriptions discovered in Gaza. The first, dated to May 533, informs us of the erection of a building during the reign of dux, comes and archont Flavius Anastasius (the names reconstructed from the first letters of each of them)[9]. The second, pointing to the same person, dates

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[7] *CIC*, *Novellae*, CIII.

[8] See also: *PLRE* IIIB, col. 1436 (*Anonymus 50*), referred to as *?governor of Palestine, circa 531*.

[9] A.H.M. J o n e s, *Inscriptions from Jerash*, JRS 18, 1928, p. 170–171:
[ἐπι Φλ(αουίου) Ανας]τασίου τοῦ μεγαλοπ(ρεπεστάτου)
[καὶ περιβλ(έπτου) κόμιτος] κ(αὶ) ἄρχ(οντος)

to August 533. The official mentioned in it is referred to by analogous titles and placed, it appears, in the same context – the erection of a building[10].

Flavius Anastasius served both as archon, that is, the governor of a province holding the title of president of Arabia (*praeses Arabiae*) and as dux of Arabia, that is, the military commander (*dux Arabiae*). The same Flavius Anastasius is likely to have been mentioned as honorary consul and dux in another inscription discovered in Qasr al Hallabat (Jordan) and dated to September 528 – August 529. Assuming that all of the inscriptions deal with one and the same person, and the chronological and geographical concurrence of the sources providing information about the official in question suggests that this is actually the case, it can be argued that he first served as dux and then was appointed to the position of the president of Arabia (*praeses Arabiae*)[11]. However, it cannot be ruled out that he exercised both of these functions at the same time, as indicated in the first inscription mentioned above. The concentration of both civilian and military powers in the hands of one person may have been considered important for the safety of the area threatened by nomadic raids. And what makes the adoption of such a solution quite probable is the fact that it was in line with the way in which the administration of this peripheral region was organised both before (at the beginning of the fifth century the province was governed by *duces and praesides Arabiae*) and afterwards (*moderatores Arabiae*, from 536)[12].

Some doubts can also be raised about the titles and ranks of honour held by the governor under discussion. In the first inscription he is referred to as *megaloprepestatos* (μεγαλοπρεπεστάτος; in Latin, *magnificentissimus*). It was the title reserved for those who held the highest honorary rank – *illustres*. In the same inscription, Flavius Anastasius also appears as *comes peribleptos (*περίβλεπτος), that is, *comes* holding the honorary rank of *spectabilis*. In the second inscription in turn he is first referred to as *comes lamprototas* (λαμπρότατος), that is, *comes* with the rank of *clarissimus*, and second as *endoxotatos* (ἐνδοξότατος), that is, as having the rank of *gloriosissimus*. The last term was reserved for a small number of dignitaries forming the elite group of *illustres*[13].

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[10] J. Six, P. Mouterde, *Inscriptions grecques conservées à l'Institut Français de Damas*, Sy 6.3, 1925, p. 224: [Επὶ…τ(οῦ) λαμπ]π(οτάτου) κ(αὶ) ἐνδοξ(οτάτου) κόμ(ετος) κ(αὶ)…δ(ου)κὸς κ(αὶ) ἄρχ(οντος)…

[11] *PLRE* IIIA, p. 62 (*Fl. Anastasius 4*); *PLRE* IIIA, p. 62 (*Fl. Anastasius 3*).

[12] J. Six, P. Mouterde, *Inscriptions…*, p. 225.

[13] On *magnificentissimi* see: P. Koch, *Die Byzantinischen Beamtentitel von 400 bis 700*, Jena 1903, p. 45–57; A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284–602. A Social, Economic and Administrative Survey,* Oxford 1964, vol. II, p. 543–544. On *illustres* see: P. Koch, *Die Byzantinischen…*, p. 34–44; A. Berger, *RE* IX, col. 1070–1085; A.H.M. Jones, *The Later…*, vol. II, p. 528–530; A. Kazhdan, *ODB* II, p. 986–987 [s.v. *illustres*]. On the subject of

We know from other sources that the title *spectabilis* began to be conferred on the governors of Arabia as late as 536, and that these officials were never bestowed with the higher rank, *illustris*[14]. The question which arises here is whether one is justified in treating both inscriptions as evidence that the rank *illustris* was, contrary to our previous opinions, held by governors of this province and that the rank *spectabilis* began to be conferred on them a few years earlier than has thus far been assumed. Or perhaps we are dealing here with an individual case of the official to whom the emperor, making an exception for some important but unknown reasons, decided to award these high ranks[15].

Paul, dux and governor of Arabia
[Paulus, *dux et praeses Arabiae*]
535

In an inscription from Gerasa, honouring him, he is designated as *megaloperestatos* (μεγαλοπρεπέστατος; with the rank of *magnificentissimus*) and as *endoxotatos* (ἐνδοξότατος; with the rank of *gloriosissimus*), dux and archon (ἄρχων). During his term in office the Maiuma holiday was celebrated in Gerasa[16]. He is identified as *dux* and *praeses Arabiae*. The inscription is dated to November 535[17].

Stephen, governor of *Palaestina Prima*
[Stephanus, *consularis Palaestinae Primae* before 1 VII 536;
proconsul Palaestinae Primae after 1 VII 536]

Born in Gaza, he came from an aristocratic family[18]. Before taking the office of the governor of Palestine, he held less important positions, serving for

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spectabiles: P. Koch, *Die Byzantinischen...*, p. 22–33; W. Ensslin, *RE* III (2Reiche), col. 1552–1568 [s.v. *spectabilis*]; A.H.M. Jones, *The Later...*, vol. II, p. 528–529; A. Kazhdan, *ODB* III, p. 1936 [s.v. *spectabilis*]. On *gloriosissimi*: P. Koch, *Die Byzantinischen...*, p. 58–73; A.H.M. Jones, *The Later...*, vol. II, p. 544; A. Kazhdan, *ODB* II, p. 855 [s.v. *gloriosus*].

[14] A.H.M. Jones, *Inscriptions...*, p. 170.

[15] J. Six, P. Mouterde, *Inscriptions...*, p. 225.

[16] AE 1903, p. 331 (cf. also: C.H. Krealing, *Gerasa. City of Decapolis*, New Heaven 1938, p. 470–471):
ἐπὶ τοῦ μαγαλοπρεπ(εστάτου) κ(αὶ) ἐνδο[ξ](οτάτου)
κ(αὶ) ἡμῶν δουκὸς κ(αὶ) ἄρχ(οντος) Παύλλου

[17] *PLRE* III, p. 975 (*Paulus 3*).

[18] Choricius of Gaza, III, 53–54.

some time, it appears, as *agens in rebus* or *tribunus et notaries*[19]. As the governor of *Palaestina Prima* he held the title of consular (*consularis Palaestinae Primae*) with the rank of *clarissimus*, and on 1 July 536, under the Novel CIII, was awarded, still as governor, the title of proconsul (he was the first to hold the title of *proconsul Palaestinae Primae*, which is clearly stipulated in the text of the Novel) with the rank of *spectabilis*[20].

In a panegyric written by Choricius of Gaza in praise of archon Stephen and dux of Arabia Arecius[21], Stephen is portrayed as an honest and just governor[22]. We learn that he established order on the roads that linked Caesarea with other Palestinian cities, clearing the roads of the bands of Egyptian robbers[23]. To his efforts Caesarea owed the avoidance of famine and the resolution of tensions caused by the public's fear of arsons[24]. By repairing existing aqueducts and building new reservoirs of water, he made sure that the city was constantly supplied with it[25]. Furthermore, he also pacified the situation in other cities of the province shaken by social disturbances – the cause of which lay, it appears, in religious controversies – or plagued by robberies carried out by Arab bands[26]. In Gaza, he carried out a large-scale building programme which involved reconstructing the city's walls, roofing the *Iustinianeum*, completing the erection of a theatre and bathhouses, and securing the constant supply of water, both drinking as well as one used for economic purposes. Stephen was also given credit for initiating, along with the bishop of Gaza, Marcian, the erection of Church of St. Sergius[27]. A delegation, made up of three Palestinian priests, informed the emperor of the governor's remarkable devotion to the idea of erecting this church[28].

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[19] Choricius of Gaza, III, 57, 59.

[20] *CIC*, *Novellae*, CIII, 2: καὶ Στέφανος ὁ περίβλεπτος ὁ νῦν προτῶς ἐπ αὐτῆς γενόμενος…

[21] Choricius of Gaza, III, *titulus*: ΕΙΣ ΑΡΑΤΙΟΝ ΔΟΥΚΑ ΚΑΙ ΣΤΕΦΑΝΟΝ ΑΡΧΟΝΤΑ.

[22] Choricius of Gaza, III, 7.

[23] Choricius of Gaza, III, 33–37.

[24] Choricius of Gaza, III, 39–42.

[25] Choricius of Gaza, III, 43–51.

[26] Choricius of Gaza, III, 52.

[27] Choricius of Gaza, III, 54–60; I, 30–31.

[28] Choricius of Gaza, III, 57–59. Biographical information, see: *PLRE* IIIB, p. 1184–1185 (*Stephanus 7*); cf. also J. Gascou, *Ducs, praesides, poètes et rhéteurs au Bas-Empire*, AnT, 6, 1998, p. 61–64.

Stephen, governor of *Palaestina Prima*
[Stephanus, *proconsul Palaestinae Primae*]
c. 555–556

In the sources providing information about his career Stephen, nicknamed the *Syrian*[29], is addressed as proconsul[30] or prefect of the city[31]. He appears in the account of the fighting which broke out in July 556 in Palestinian Caesarea between the Christians on one hand and the Jews and Samaritans on the other. Stephen is reported to have tried to defend the attacked Christians on whom the conflict took a great death toll, and whose churches were pillaged over its course. Unfortunately, he was assaulted by Samaritans in the praetorium, robbed of everything he had, and murdered[32]. The same sources inform us that the emperor, having listened to the testimony of the governor's wife, who arrived in Constantinople after her husband's death, dispatched to Palestine troops led by Amancius. Amancius stifled the uprising and severely punished the governor's murderers.

The official under consideration could have been neither a proconsul nor a prefect of the city, since such offices did not exist at that time. These two terms should then be treated as relating, somewhat confusingly, to one office in the provincial administration – governor with the rank of proconsul (as I have mentioned above, beginning from 1 July 536 governors of this province held the title of proconsul). Stephen is thought of as having been the proconsul of *Palaestina Prima* (*proconsul Palaestinae Primae*) because the praetorium where he was murdered was situated in Caesarea, the capital of the province. Contrary to the account of Malalas, the outbreak of the uprising of the Samaritans should be dated to July 555. And it is during this period that Stephen exercised his office[33].

Flavius Entolius, governor of *Palaestina Prima*
[Flavius Entolius, *proconsul Palaestinae Primae*]
c. mid-sixth century

The inscription discovered in Caesarea contains information about construction work carried out in a church located in this city during Flavius Entolius'

[29] Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *De insidiis*, 48: ὁ ἐπίκλην Σύρος.

[30] Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *De insiidis*, 48; John Malalas, XVIII, 119: καὶ τοῦ ἄρχοντος τῆς αὐτῆς πόλεως ἐξελθόντος πρὸς βοήθειαν τῶν χριστιανῶν...

[31] Theophanes, AM 6048: Στέφανον δέ, τὸν ἔπαρχον τῆς αὐτῆς πόλεως, ἐν τῷ πραιτωρίῳ ἀνεῖλον...

[32] Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *De insidiis*, 48; John Malalas, XVIII, 119; Theophanes, AM 6048.

[33] *PLRE* IIIB, p. 1186 (*Stephanus 14*).

tenure. The official, in the tenth indiction, is referred to by a Greek term *stratelatos* (στρατηλάτης) and *anthypatos* (ἀνθύπατος)[34]. The first of these terms, very general, was used to refer to any official or military commander, while the second was a counterpart of Latin proconsul. This means that Flavius Entolius must have held the office of proconsul of *Palaestina Prima* (the inscription comes from Caesarea, the capital of the province), and since the governors of this province bore this title from 1 July 536, he must have exercised this function after that date. According to Martindale, Flavius Entolius, while serving as de facto governor of the province, also held the honourable rank of *magister militum*. This, in the opinion of this scholar, is the most likely explanation of the use of military nomenclature, to be found in two other examples coming from the region of Thebaid. Of course, it cannot be ruled out that the emperor vested the proconsul with some military powers (without granting him the title *magister militum*) by way of exception. However, such an interpretation is less plausible[35].

Theodore, governor of Palaestina Prima
[Theodorus, *proconsul Palaestinae Primae*]
the beginning of the seventh century

Theodorus, to whom the source referenced below refers as *discursor* (δισκούρσωρ) and *antyhypatos* (ἀνθύπατος) of Caesarea, arrived in Hierapolis to marry a local woman whom he then took to Caesarea[36]. Martindale dates his tenure to the beginning of the seventh century. However, he provides no arguments to support this opinion – it seems to be based on the fact that the eulogy penned by Sophronius, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, in honour of Cyrus and John, which remains the only source mentioning Theodorus, is likely to have originated in this period. However, the references to this official included in the eulogy cannot be relied on for determining his term in office.

Just as in the cases described above, in this one, too, *anthypatos* from Caesarea is a proconsul of the province of Palaestina Prima (*proconsul Palaestinae*

[34] B. Lifshitz, *Césarée de Palestine…*, p. 507 [=RB 68, 1961, p. 121, inscr. no 15]:
Ἐπι Φλ(αοίου) Ἐντολίου ἐνδοξοτ(άτου)
στατηλ(άτου) καὶ ανθυπάτου
Φλ(άουιος) Στρατήγιος περίβλ(επτος) πατὴρ
καὶ πρωτε(ύων)…

[35] *PLRE* IIIA, p. 443 (*Fl. Entolius*).

[36] Sophronius, *Laudatio*, 68, col. 3657: Ἐν Ἱερᾷπόλει ὁ διοσκούρσωρ Θεόδωρος ὁ Καισαρείας ξρηματίσας ἀνθύπατος.

Primae). The second term – *discursor* – is very uncommon and, as a consequence, difficult to identify. There are only two seals containing this title mentioned by Martindale. Attempts at its identification are based on linguistic congruence between Greek and Latin. From the etymological point of view, the term is similar to a Latin word *cursor* which denotes an envoy in the imperial service (from provincial governors to the bureau of the prefect), that is, a low ranking official. Thus the possibility of exercising both functions at the same time – discursor (*cursor*) and governor – needs to be rejected. Theodorus may have first served as governor and then, after leaving office, acted as discursor, and it is in this capacity that he appeared in Hierapolis. What makes such an interpretation plausible is the fact that it was against the law for a governor to leave his province. Hence, the visit of the head of *Palaestina Prima* in Hierapolis, a city located in other province, needs to be regarded as highly unlikely[37].

Governors of the Diocese of the East (*comites Orientis*)

Patricius
[Patricius, comes Orientis]
527

Coming from Armenia, he took office in September 527. Acting under specific instructions from the emperor, and relying on significant financial means the latter supplied him with, Patricius went to Palmyra with a goal to reconstruct a number of buildings, including bathhouses and public buildings damaged by the earthquake which occurred in the city the year before. In order to better protect Roman territories, the emperor had the *numerus* unit sent to this city, to be stationed there along with a unit of border forces (*limitanei*). The commander residing in Emesa was placed in charge of these troops[38].

Martindale is of the opinion that, in addition to rebuilding the city, Patricius was entrusted with the task of organising a new garrison in Palmyra[39]. The hypo-

[37] *PLRE* IIIB, p. 1283–1284 (*Theodorus 168*).

[38] John Malalas, XVIII, 2: προηγάγετο κόμητα ἀνατολῆς ἐν ᾿Αντιοχείᾳ ὀνόματι Πατρίκιον, ᾿Αρμένιον· ᾧτινι δέδωκε χρήματα πολλά, κελεύσας αὐτῷ ἀπελθεῖν καὶ ἀνανεῶσαι πόλιν τῆς Φοινίκης εἰς τὸ λίμιτον τὴν λεγομένην Πάλμυραν καὶ τὰς ἐκκλησίας καὶ τὰ δημόσια, κελεύσας καὶ ἀριθμὸν στρατιωτῶν μετὰ τῶν λιμιτανέων καθέζεσθαι ἐκεῖ καὶ τὸν δοῦκα ᾿Εμίσσης πρὸς τὸ φυλάττεσθαι τὰ ᾿Ρωμαϊκὰ καὶ ᾿Ιεροσόλυμα. Cf. also: Theophanes, AM 6020.

[39] *PLRE* IIIB, p. 971 (*Patricius 1*).

thesis, although its direct confirmation is not to be found in the Greek text, seems quite convincing. Firstly, because governors of the Diocese of the East, unlike vicars of other dioceses, were exceptionally vested with military powers[40]. Secondly, in the account of Malalas and Theophanes, whose text is indebted to Malalas, the performance of both of these tasks, that is, the reconstruction of the destroyed city and the establishment of the new garrison almost coincided in time – the latter was carried out soon after the former.

Lazarus
[Lazarus, *comes Orientis*]
542

Promulgated on 1 May 542, the Novel CLVIII (the only source which contains references to this official) is addressed specifically to Lazarus. Relating to marriages contracted between colons (that is, the peasants tied to the land they leased) in two provinces, Osrhoene and Mesopotamia, the document obliged the owners of the land estates that relied on the colons' labour to respect the already existing marriages – the married colons could not be separated and their children could not be taken away. At the same time, however, the landlords were placed under obligation to prevent such marriages from taking place in the future. Those who breached these regulations were going to be punished with a fine of three pounds of gold, and it was the duty of the *comes* of the East and his officials to enforce the law enacted by the emperor[41].

Zemarchus
[Zemarchus, *comes Orientis*]
560–561

Zemarchus is reported to have been sent by the emperor to Antioch in reaction to the conflict which, claiming a great number of victims, broke out in the city between the orthodox population and the adherents of a Monophysite

[40] Sz. Olszaniec, *Comes Orentis – Zivil- oder Militärbeamter?*, [in:] *Society and Religions. Studies in Greek and Roman History*, ed. D. Musiał, vol. II, Toruń 2007, p. 99–107; J. Wiewiorowski, *Sądownictwo późnorzymskich wikariuszy diecezji* (*Judiciary of Diocesan Vicars in the Later Roman Empire*), Poznań 2012, p. 74–79.

[41] *CIC*, *Novellae*, CLVII. See also: J. Wiewiorowski, *Sądownictwo …*, p. 276.

bishop, Severus. Capturing malefactors, the imperial envoy sentenced many of them to banishment, forfeiture or mutilation[42].

The figure of Zemarchus is known to us from one brief remark included in the chronicle by Theophanes the Confessor. At one point in his work Theophanes reports that a dangerous fire broke out in December 560 in Julian's harbour in Constantinople, while the epidemics and earthquakes swept across two other cities – Cilician Anazarbos and Syrian Antioch. Theophanes' narrative leads to the conclusion that the fighting between the supporters and opponents of Severus must have occurred at about the same time. Thus his term in office can be dated to between 560 and 561[43].

Anonymous person
[Anonymus, *comes Orientis*, *praefectus praetorio per Orientem*?]
580–581

This anonymous official appears in a story about one of Antioch's inhabitants, Anatolius, a man of low social status, who, in securing his appointment to a number of public posts, began to rise through social hierarchy. Caught red-handed while making offerings to pagan deities, he was tried and found guilty of sorcery. The source referenced below informs us that he bribed the hegemon of the East and would have been set free had it not been for the rebellion staged by the population which prevented his release. Remaining for some time in custody in Antioch, he was later moved to Constantinople, where he was tortured and killed[44]. According to Evagrius Scholasticus, the only source which provides information about this topic, these events took place in the third year of Emperor Tiberius' reign[45].

The last information, quite precise, leads us to date Anatolius' affair to 580 or 581, assuming of course that the author of the source began counting the years of Tiberius's reign with 26 September 578, that is, with the year of his accession to the throne[46]. According to Martindale, this anonymous corrupted official, on

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[42] Theophanes, AM 6053: καὶ ἀποστεῖλας ὁ βασιλεὺς Ζήμαρχον, τὸν κόμητα τῆς ἀνατολῆς, ἐκώλυσε τοὺς ἀτάκτους καὶ πολλοὺς ἐξώρισε καὶ ἐδήμευσε καὶ ἠκρωτηρίασεν.

[43] Cf. *PLRE* IIIB, p. 1416 (*Zemarchus 1*).

[44] Evagrius Scholasticus, V, 18 (τὸν τῆς Εῴας ἡγούμενον).

[45] Evagrius Scholasticus, V, 17. For a twin and much later account see (the fourtheenth century) see Nicephorus Callistus (XVIII, 4).

[46] W.E. Kaegi, *ODB* III, p. 2083–2084 (*Tiberios I*).

whom fell the task of trying Anatolius, exercised the function of the prefect of the East or the governor of the Diocese of the East about 579[47]. However, given the remarks made above, the dating presented by Martindale needs to be corrected.

Some doubts concerning this office arise in connection with the term "hegemon" (ἡγεμών), used by Evagrius. In Greek the word "hegemony" (ἡγεμονία) was primarily used to refer to the "governorship of a province"[48]. However, such an understanding is ruled out here, since the term *hegemon of the East* cannot be taken to geographically refer to a province but only to a diocese (of the East) or a prefecture (of the East). In sources from the period of the early Empire, the word "hegemon" corresponds to Latin terms *princeps, praefectus Augustalis* or *legatus*. However, none of them apply in our case[49]. A Greek word which in all epochs and in all kinds of sources was always taken to mean a prefect (of both the provincial administration, for example, *praefectus Aegypti*, as well as the central one, for example, *praefectus annonae*) and was most often used to refer to prefect of *praetorium*, was the term *eparchos* (ἔπαρχος)[50].

Taking some generally known facts into account, it seems justifiable to assume that this anonymous corrupt official served as the governor of a diocese; for the prefect of the East resided in Constantinople and not in Antioch, where the events recounted above took place[51]. The city on the river Orontes was the seat of the governor of the Diocese of the East[52]. In Scythopolis in 358 or 359 the *comes* of the East, Flavius Domicius Modestus presided over a witchcraft trial. Evidence that he may not have been an exception and that there were other officials similar in rank who heard cases in courts of first instance can be found in a number of literary sources, as Jacek Wiewiorowski has recently noted[53]. Moreover, religious issues were also within these officials' remit (although they did not rank high on their agenda)[54].

The governor of a diocese, the official lower in rank than the prefect of the East, could hear cases in a court of law in his capacity as a lower ranking judge

[47] *PLRE* IIIB, p. 1428 (*Anonymus 4*).

[48] H.J. M a s o n, *Greek Terms...*, p. 137.

[49] *Ibidem*, p. 144–145.

[50] *Ibidem*, p. 138–139.

[51] D. F e i s s e l, *L'empereur et l'administration impériale,* [in:] *Le monde byzantin.* Tome 1 – *L'Empire romain d'Orient 330–641,* éd. C. M o r r i s s o n et al., ²Paris 2006, p. 96.

[52] G. D o w n e y, *A Study of Comites Orientis and the Consulares Syriae*, Princeton 1939, *passim*; Sz. O l s z a n i e c, *Comes Orientis...*, *passim*; J. W i e w i o r o w s k i, *Sądownictwo...*, p. 86.

[53] J. W i e w i o r o w s k i, *Sądownictwo...*, p. 264 (the Author uses older literature and one passage of *Rerum gestarum* by Ammianus Marcellinus [XIX, 12, 6]).

[54] *Ibidem*, p. 198–206, 226–227.

(*iudex medii*)[55]. Such an interpretation is supported by the line of reasoning followed by Evagrius who clearly distinguishes between the two phases the trial in question passed through – the first, "lower", taking place in Antioch and the second, "higher", held in Constantinople.

Asterius
[Asterius, *comes Orientis, praefectus praetorio per Orientem*?]
c. 588

According to Evagrius Scholasticus, to whom we owe the only surviving information about Asterius, the governor of the province of the East got into conflict with the Antiochian patriarch, Gregory. The city's rulers as well as some of its ordinary citizens, including, among others, Antiochian artisans, took the side of the governor, and the patriarch, from whom his opponents had reputedly suffered some harm, was insulted in the streets and in theatre. Following these events, Asterius was dismissed from his office and replaced by John[56]. His life ended during the earthquake which struck the city in October 588[57].

An imprecise way of defining the office held by Asterius (a governor of the province) should not be regarded as a hindrance in identifying the person in question as the *comes* of the East[58]. Although the Greek term "arche" (ἀρχή) found in Evagrius was used to denote a province or, very rarely, a prefecture[59], the case discussed here, too, concerns the events that took place in the city in which the governor of the Diocese of the East was based. At the same time a Greek word *diepon* (διέπων), also used by Evagrius and conveying a number of meanings (it denoted every person given an executive role, including the emperor, provincial governors or prefect *Augustalis*) often referred to vicars[60].

We do not know for sure when Asterius began to exercise his function. This could have taken place in the first half of 588, since his successor, John, was

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[55] *Ibidem*, p. 85.

[56] Evagrius Scholasticus, VI, 7: Ἀστερίου τὴν ἑῴαν ἀρχὴν διέποντος, ἔριδός τέ τινος συστάσης αὐτῷ τε καὶ Γρηγορίῳ, τὸ πᾶν τῆς πόλεως κεφάλαιον ἐς τὴν Ἀστερίου μοῖραν ἀπεκρίθη, προσέλαβε δὲ καὶ εἴ τι δημῶδες ἦν καὶ τὰς τέχνας τῇ πόλει. Cf. a similar text of Nicephorus Callistus (XVIII, 12), based on Evagrius.

[57] Evagrius Scholasticus, VI, 8.

[58] See: *PLRE* IIIA, p. 139 (*Asterius 3*): *he was comes Orientis rather than PPO Orientis* (prefect of the prefecture of the East – P.F.).

[59] H.J. Mason, *Greek Terms...*, p. 110.

[60] *Ibidem*, p. 132–133.

removed from this position no later than in June 588. However, we also do not know for how long John remained in office. According to Martindale, Asterius kept his post between 587 and 588[61]. It seems quite plausible, as the social conflict in Antioch must have lasted no less than a few weeks, and no more than a few months, before the emperor took the decision to dismiss his official. For obvious reasons, the ruler tried to contain social unrest wherever and whenever it broke out.

The object of the conflict between the governor and the patriarch remains unknown. Evagrius' account suggests that Gregory also got into conflict with the city's elite (as his account is very imprecise here we are unable to reconstruct the details of the whole affair). Confronted with the social tension in the city, the emperor decided to dismiss the official on whom he could not rely for containing the crowd that behaved in an aggressive way towards the patriarch. There is nothing unusual about the way in which the emperor handled the situation. In taking this step, he simply followed a pattern established by his predecessors[62].

John
[Ioannes, *comes Orientis*]
c. 588

He took office after Asterius was removed from it. The emperor entrusted him with the task of conducting an investigation into the trouble which flared up in Antioch during his predecessor's tenure, causing so much animus against Gregory. Devoid of organisational skills, John, says Evagrius, issued orders encouraging people to inform on Gregory. When a local banker accused the latter of adultery and misappropriation, and John failed to dismiss these accusations as unjustifiable, the patriarch left Antioch for Constantinople to exonerate himself of the charges on which he was about to be condemned. After clearing his name, he returned to his city, and his accuser was scourged and sentenced to banishment[63].

John's fall must have taken place after Gregory secured his acquittal in Constantinople, or after his return to Antioch, where he appeared four months before the outbreak of the earthquake in October 588, that is, in June of this year. From this it follows that John must have been dismissed in June 588 at the latest, and this remains the only documented date in his life. According to Martindale, he held his office between 587 and 588[64].

[61] See also *PLRE* IIIA, p. 139 (*Asterius 3*).
[62] P. Filipczak, *Władze państwowe*..., p. 35–49. See also: *PLRE* IIIA, p. 139 (*Asterius 3*).
[63] Evagrius Scholasticus, VI, 7. See also: Nicephorus Callistus, XVIII, 12.
[64] *PLRE* IIIA, p. 678 (*Ioannes 97*).

Bacchus
[Bacchus, *comes Orientis*]
588–589

He exercised his function between September 588 and August 589, as evidenced by the inscription discovered in Qasr el-Banat in northern Syria. The inscription is quite specific about the title he bore, referring to him as the most eminent comes of the East. His name, with the exception of the last three unclear letters, is missing from the source, to which, one might add, we owe the only information we have about this official. It pertains to his order to clearly mark border stones near Antioch. Responsibility for carrying out this task fell on *cancellarius* John[65].

Martindale identifies *comes*' name as Bacchus. He argues, against the editors of the source, that the ending of the name should not be interpreted as *lou (*λου*,* hence Παυλου in the quoted text of the inscription) but as *chou* (χου, that is Βακχου in Greek, *Bacchus* in Latin)[66].

The stones, mentioned in the inscription, may have also served as the so-called cadastral stones used for the delineation of the boundaries of the land estates for taxation purposes – that such a practice was followed in the region of Syria is attested to in a number of other sources. However, the examples provided by these sources pertain to much earlier times[67]. The case discussed here is one of the latest. Assuming that the stones were actually used for cadastral purposes, the inscription should be regarded as testifying to the comes' participation in the collection of taxes on the local administration level. Receiving the order from Bacchus, *cancellarius* John must have been one of his subordinates. This, in turn, would lead us to the conclusion that we are dealing here with a low ranking functionary responsible for carrying out logistical and technical tasks in the field[68].

Bonosus
[Bonosus, *comes Orientis*?]
c. 609

The most detailed account concerning Bonosus can be found in the chronicle by John of Nikiu (the end of the seventh century). Egypt witnessed the

[65] *IGLS* II, inscription no 530:
κατὰ κέλευσιν [Παυ]λου τοῦ ἐνδοξ(οτάτου) κόμ(ητος) τῆς ἕω

[66] *PLRE* IIIA, p. 162 (*[Bac]chus 3*)

[67] See. *IGLS* XI, inscription no A11 (3rd/4rd cent.), no. A20 (the second decade of the third century).

[68] See: O. Seeck, *RE* III, col. 1456–1459 [s.v. *cancellarius*].

outbreak of a rebellion against Theophilus, an official to whom Emperor Phocas entrusted the administration of five cities. The emperor's representative is reported to have perished in the rebellion. In response, Phocas decided to send Bonosus, a military leader from the province of the East whom John describes as extremely cruel, to the rebellious city. Bonosus first arrived in Cilicia, where he raised significant forces, and then marched on Antioch. Seizing control of the city, he started a campaign of terror – his opponents were strangled, burned and drowned. Members of the circus factions were put to sword or, at best, sentenced to banishment. Monks in the city also suffered mistreatment[69].

Bonosus learned about the rebellion raised by Heraclius during his stay in Palestinian Caesarea, and it is from this city that he went to Egypt or, to be more precise, to Athribis, in the Nile Delta. Soon afterwards he fought the victorious battle of Menouf. In Nikiu Heraclius' followers were executed or sent into exile[70]. In the meantime, the survivors from Menouf, accompanied by some barbarian units and the people of Alexandria, including members of the Green faction, set to work preparing the defense of the city. At Bonosus' order, one of his subordinates approached the metropolis via irrigation tunnels, while Bonosus himself advanced first towards Miphamonis and then towards Demarouni – both of which, according to John's account, were situated near Alexandria. John says that these events took place in the seventh year of Phocas' reign, that is, in 609[71]. The clash was not long in coming. Bonosus, defeated, retreated to the city of Kérioun. The forces that remained at his disposal began to dry up[72]. The governor moved to Nikiu, whence he made one more attempt to capture Alexandria, but to no effect. Constantly attacked, he decided to leave Egypt. He got to Palestine, but its inhabitants chased him away in revenge for the cruelties which he had once inflicted on them. He then went to Constantinople, to Phocas' court[73]. His career ended there, following

[69] John of Nikiu, CV (p. 420, ed. Zotenberg): *Phocas... fit partir un général extrêmement cruel, nommé Pierre, de la province d'Orient, qui était comme une hyéne féroce*. The fragment *de la province d'Orient* is dealt with by Zotenberg in the footnote no 4 (p. 420): *Au lieu de: il le nomma comte d'Orient*. The same interpretation is to be found in the English translation by R.S. Charles: *And when Phocas heard, he was very wroth and sent a very malignantly-tempered general, named Bonosus, from the province of the east. And he was like a fierce hyena*. On Bonosus' attacks on the Greens in Antioch see also: *Doctrina Jacobi*, I, 40, p. 129–130.

[70] John of Nikiu, CVII, p. 425–426.

[71] John of Nikiu, CVII, p. 427.

[72] John of Nikiu, CVIII, p. 427–428.

[73] John of Nikiu, CIX, p. 429–430.

the arrival of Heraclius' Egyptian fleet. Bonosus was murdered by the so-called charioteers, that is, members of the circus faction that rebelled against him, and his body was burned[74].

Similar information can be found in the *History of Hieraclius* ascribed to the Armenian bishop Sebeos (the seventh century). According to this author, when the largest cities of the Empire – Constantinople, Alexandria, Jerusalem and Antioch – rose in rebellion against Phocas, which took place soon after his accession to the throne, the new emperor sent Prince Bonosus to subdue the rebels in Jerusalem and Antioch. The 'prince' is reported to have taken both cities by the sword[75].

The *Easter Chronicle*, in turn, contains information that in late September, in the fourteenth indiction, the news came in Constantinople that the patriarch of Antioch, Anastasius, had been killed by some soldiers[76]. The same chronicle informs us that this horrible crime was committed by Bonosus acting on Phocas' order and at the instigation of one Theophilus[77]. One more detail concerning Bonosus to be found in this source is that he was captured in Constantinople, in Julian's harbour. Trying to save his life, he threw himself into water, but he was captured by a soldier from the guard of *excubitores* who killed him with his sword. His body was then dragged to the Forum of the Ox and burned[78].

The *Chronographia* by Theophanes the Confessor tells us that the Jews in Antioch raised a rebellion against the city's Christian population. During this conflict the patriarch Anastasius was mutilated and murdered. Many landowners were killed as well. Emperor Phocas designated Bonosus for the position of the *comes* of the East, while Cottanas was placed in charge of the army. Both were sent to fight against the rebells. After raising their troops, they launched an attack on the Jews, many of whom were killed, while others were mutilated or banished from the city[79].

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[74] John of Nikiu, CX, p. 432–433. See also: John of Antioch, 321, p. 553–554: Bonosus was murdered by members of the Green faction. After his body was burned on the Forum, members of the Blue faction fled to Rhodes where they were attacked for being Bonosus' followers, see: *Doctrina Jacobi*, V, 20, p. 214.

[75] Sebeos, 2 (ed. Macler) = 31, p. 57 (ed. Thompson).

[76] *Paschal Chronicle*, p. 699.

[77] *Paschal Chronicle*, p. 700.

[78] *Paschal Chronicle*, p. 700. On the burning of his body on the Forum see also: Patriarch Nicephorus, 1, p. 36–37 (ed. C. Mango).

[79] Teophanes, AM 6101. See the identical account by George Cedrenus (vol. I, p. 712). The the murder of Anastasius by the Jews, without any additional information, is also reported by Michael the Syrian, X, 21, p. 379.

The identification of the office (*comes* of the East)[80] held by Bonosus is only hypothetical. It is based on the account by Theophanes the Confessor which was created long after the events to which it pertains. The reliability of this account is difficult to determine as we do not know the sources from which Theophanes was drawing in writing his own work (the eastern sources to which *Chronographia* is indebted were discussed above). An obscurity of the account of John of Nikiu, as well as the fact that the only surviving medieval copy of his chronicle written in a variation of the Ethiopian language (*Ge'ez*) do not help in determining Bonosus' administrative identity. Both Hermann Zotenberg and Robert Henry Charles reject the possibility of translating the term by which Bonosus is referred to in the original text as *comes* of the East[81]. The authors of the English translation of Sebeos' *History* remark that in the original Armenian version of the work only the word *ishkan* (prince) appears, and it is on this fact alone that they base their identification of Bonosus as the *comes* of the East[82].

The career of this man can clearly be divided into three phases – Syrian, Egyptian and Constantinopolitan. In accepting the assumption that Bonosus was sent to Syria to restore order, one is led to the conclusion that he must have acted in an official capacity as governor of the Diocese of the East. The military intervention was a specific task to be carried out under special circumstances. The case dealt with here should then be regarded as supporting the hypothesis mentioned above, that the office in question was civilian in character and that its holders were only extraordinarily vested with military powers[83]. The assumption of office by Bonosus at the moment of the outbreak of the anti-government rebellions in the cities of Syro-Palestine, inherently connected to the task of bringing the situation there under control, typified the circumstances in which different officials had taken their office in the past. The restoration of order by the methods regarded today as drastic is also characteristic of the way – well-documented in our sources – in which these imperial officials used to deal with social disturbances. The same can be said of the reasons which led Bonosus to leave Syria for Constantinople – a pressure from the locals and, perhaps, the outbreak of other rebellions[84].

[80] Such views are expressed by A.J. Butler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt and the last Thirty Years of Roman Domination*, Oxford 1978, p. 14; *PLRE* IIIA, p. 239–240 (*Bonosus 2*); V. Déroche, *Introduction historique. Entre histoire et apocalypse*, [in:] G. Dagron, V. Déroche, *Juifs et chrétiens dans l'Orient du VIIe siècle*, TM XI, Paris 1991, p. 20–21.

[81] See also: W.E. Kaegi, *Heraclius. Emperor of Byzantium*, Cambridge 2003, p. 44, 50 (consistently referred to as – *general*).

[82] Sebeos, p. 57, n. 366 (ed. Thompson).

[83] Sz. Olszaniec, *Comes Orientis...*, *passim*.

[84] P. Filipczak, *Władze państwowe...*, *passim*.

Judging by the information drawn from different sources, the mission in Syria appears to have been the only task with which Bonosus was entrusted. Based on the account of John of Nikiu, clearly unfavourable to the official under discussion, his expedition to Egypt was the result of the developments in the region. His action there, which is described in our sources in greater detail, suggests that he was versed in military profession. However, despite his expertise in the field, he was defeated, and his failure made him return first to Syria and then to Constantinople.

Filotheus or Flavius?
[Filotheus, Flavius?, *comes Orientis*?, *praefectus pretorio per Orientem*?]
Mid-sixth century or the latter half of the sixth century

The figure is known from one inscription dated to the period between 1 October 537 and 30 September 538[85]. It survives only in fragments discovered in Antioch in the complex of bathhouses (the so-called bathhouse F). The names of the official have been hypothetically reconstructed, their reconstruction being based on the one surviving letter from a male Roman name which appears in the inscription.

The titles borne by this official have also been hypothetically reconstructed. Louis Jalabert and René Mouterde, the editors and commentators of the inscription, are of the opinion that its text suggests the combination of two functions in the hands of the official in question: *comes Orientis* and *comes sacrarum largitionum* (the officer whose role was to oversee public finances)[86]. They contend that such an interpretation is supported by a number of analogies to be found in the period of the early Empire (in 374 Flavius Tatian held the title of both the *comes* of the East and the *comes sacrarum largitionum*, as did Ephrem of Amida in the years 522–524 and 526–527)[87]. However, according to Martindale, the official in question, while actually discharging the duty of the *comes* of the East, may have held the title of the *comes sacrarum largitionum* on an honorary basis only[88].

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[85] G. Downey, *Greek and Latin Inscriptions*, [in:] *Antioch on the Orontes: The Excavations of 1937–1939*, ed. R. Stillwell, vol. III, Princeton 1941, p. 84; *IGLS* III, inscription no 786, text after reconstruction:

ἐπὶ Φ[λαυίου] Αν]θ(ίμου)... τοῦ μαγαλοπρεπεστάτου κ(αὶ) ἐνδοξοτάτου τῆς Εῴας
[ἐπά]ρ[χου] καὶ τῶν ἀπά[ντων κ]όμ(ιτος) θείων λαρ[γιτιόν]ων

[86] A. Kazhdan, *ODB* I, p. 486 (*comes sacrarum largitionum*).

[87] *IGLS* III, p. 451.

[88] *PLRE* IIIB, p. 1427 (*Fl...th...*).

The inscription also contains the term "eparch of the East" which, as I have already mentioned, was basically used to refer to the prefect of praetorium of the East. However, considering the fact that the inscription was discovered in Antioch, that is, in the city which was the seat of the *comes* of the East, it seems reasonable to assume that the official mentioned in the inscription, just as in the case above, was appointed to the position of the *comes* of the East. Moreover, the French editors of this inscription, Louis Jalabert and René Mouterde, argue that the term *eparch of the East* was at that time used to refer to the governor of the province of Celesyria (*Syria Coele*) who, they claim, also acted as head of the Diocese of the Orient. Following this line of reasoning the eparch in question can be regarded as the *comes* of the East[89].

The text of the inscription also reveals that during the tenure of this Flavius a public bathhouse called Sigma was rebuilt (we owe the reconstruction of its name to one surviving letter and to a number of similarities concerning the way in which different buildings from other cities were named), along with a quadruple portico. A more precise identification of the building encounters difficulties. The text may refer to the Severan bathhouses (that is, those built during his reign), the Salian bathhouses (perhaps also known as Caligula's bathhouses), or to the so-called senatorial bathhouses (built during the reign of Diocletian)[90].

Anonymous person
[Anonymus, *comes Orientis*?]
554/556 or 567

This anonymous official appears in one inscription discovered near Antioch and dated to the years 554–556 or to 567. In it, he is referred to as *comes*. The text of the inscription is focused on the delineation of the area of the law of asylum to be in force around the Chapel of St. Stephen the Martyr. There are three male names mentioned in the inscription: Honorius, Andrew and John, but, according to Martindale, none of them refers to the *comes* under discussion. Given its location, the artifact is highly likely to refer to the *comes* of the East (a geographical designation is absent from the text). The official held the rank of *endoxotatos* (ἐνδοξότατος; *gloriosissimus*)[91].

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89 *IGLS* III, p. 451.

90 *IGLS* III, p. 451; G. D o w n e y, *Greek and Latin Inscriptions…*, p. 84.

91 *IGLS* II, inscription no 618: τοῦ ἐνδοξο(τάτου) κόμ(ητος). See: *PLRE* IIIB, p. 1433 (*Anonymus 31*).

Theodore, vicarius, *cubicularius* in *Palaestina Tertia*
[Theodorus, *vicarius, cubicularius, Palaestina Tertia*]
629

Attempts to identify this official are based mainly on the *Chronographia* by Theophanes the Confessor. Theodore, referred to in the text as vicarius, is reported to have been stationed in the settlement called Mouchea, preparing to launch an attack on the Muslim troops. Having received a word from his informant, an Arab from the Quraish tribe, that the time was ripe for the attack, he struck the Muslims near Mothos. Relying on soldiers who kept guard in some desert posts, he defeated the Arab troops led by four emirs whom Muḥammad himself, as Theophanes reports, had appointed to the position of commanders shortly before his death[92]. Three of these emirs were killed in combat. The only Byzantine source which, apart from Theophanes' *Chronographia*, provides information about Theodore is the chronicle of George Cedrenus. Cedrenus mentions Theodore when giving an account of the battle against four emirs. However, the official under discussion is referred to in his chronicle as *cubicularius*[93].

Both sources recount the battle of Mu'ta (today Jordanian al-Mihna, situated about 160 kilometres suth of Amman in the area of the Byzantine province *Palaestina Tertia*) which is thought to have taken place in September 629[94]. Among the scholars who have covered this event, few have paid their attention to the person of Theodore. According to Felix Meria Abel, author of a classic work on the history of Palestine in antiquity, Theodore served as governor of the Diocese of the East[95]. However, it needs to be recalled that this official bore

[92] T e o p h a n e s, AM 6123: καὶ ἦλθον κατέναντι Μουχέων κώμης λεγομένης, ἐν ᾗ ὑπῆρχε Θεόδωρος ὁ βικάριος, θέλοντες ἐπιρρίψαι κατὰ τῶν ᾿Αράβων τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς εἰδωλοθυσίας αὐτῶν. μαθὼν δὲ τοῦτο ὁ βικάριος παρά τινος κορασηνοῦ, Κουταβᾶ λεγομένου καὶ μισθίου αὐτοῦ γενομένου, συνάγει πάντας τοὺς στρατιώτας τῶν παραφυλάκων τῆς ἐρήμου, καὶ ἀκριβωσάμενος παρὰ τοῦ Σαρακηνοῦ τὴν ἡμέραν καὶ τὴν ὥραν, ἐν ᾗ ἤμελλον ἐπιρρίπτειν αὐτοῖς, αὐτὸς ἐπιρρίψας αὐτοῖς ἐν χωρίῳ ἐπιλεγομένῳ Μόθους ἀποκτέννει τρεῖς ἀμηραίους καὶ τὸ πλῆθος τοῦ λαοῦ.

[93] G e o r g e C e d r e n u s, vol. I, p. 751: καὶ ἦλθον κατέναντι Θεοδώρου κουβικουλαρίου, καὶ συμβαλόντες πόλεμον ἀναιροῦνται οἱ τρεῖς ἀμηράδες καὶ πλῆθος πολὺ ἐξ αὐτῶν.

[94] See, for example, M.V. K r i v o v, *Sraženie pri Mu'te po arabskim istočnikam i Teofanu*, VV 40, 1979, p. 98; W.E. K a e gi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquest,* Cambridge 1992, p. 72; M. M i o t t o, *Η ισλαμική κατάκτηση της Συρίας. Πως το Βυζάντιο έχασε την Ανατολή του*, Athens 2007, p. 62 (the work offers the most precise dating, between 27 August and 25 September 629).

[95] P.M. A b e l, *Histoire de la Palestine depuis la conquête d'Alexandre jusqu'à l'invasion arabe*, vol. II, Paris 1952, p. 393: *vicaire du diocèse d'Orient*. See also: M.J. d e G o e j e, *Mémoire de la conquête de la Syrie*, Leyden 1900, p. 6: *Théodore le Vicaire*.

the title of *comes* – and not *vicarius* – of the East (*comes Orientis*). Abel may be right only in so far as we assume that Theophanes made a msitake by using the title *vicarius of the East* to refer to someone who actually was *comes of the East*. However, even if this was the case, the participation of the *comes* of the East in the battle of Mu'ta still needs to be regarded as highly unlikely given a low status enjoyed by this official in the period under consideration – following the reform of administration introduced by Justinian I the jurisdiction of the *comes* of the East was limited to northern Syria and, with regard to some minor matters, to Mesopotamia and Osrhoene[96].

A Russian scholar, Michail Krivov, is of the opinion that vicarius Theodore needs to be equated with an Arab leader, Farva Ibn ʿAmr al-Ǧuḏāmī. A Christian and a member of the Nafuta clan, Farva came from the tribe of the Ghassānids, Rome's allies. Unlike other Arab leaders, with regard to whom different sources usually use the words *sahib* or *malik*, which denote sovereign and independent rulers, Farva is referred to by the term *amil* which, according to Krivov, relates to a person who remains in somebody's service, a ruler who acts on behalf of someone else – a Byzantine plenipotentiary (Krivov uses the term "governor" but the way he expounds his views clearly suggests that he does not mean a governor *sensu stricto*, that is, a governor of a province)[97]. Farva's participation in the battle on Byzantium's side is unquestionably confirmed by a number of Arab writers: Ibn Isḥāḳ (about 704–761), Al-Wāḳidī (about 748–822), At-Ṭabarī (about 838–923) and Ibn Al-Athīr (1160–1233). According to this Russian scholar, the name Theodore can be a distorted version – distorted by Theophanes or by the author on whom Theophanes drew in writing his own chronicle – of the Arab name Farva. There also exists another possibility: Theodore is Farva's second, Christian name by which he was known among the Greeks. In other words, Krivov considers Theodore and Farva to be one and the same person[98].

This interpretation, in Krivov's view, is further corroborated by a comparison between the *Chronographia* and different Arab sources. The Russian scholar stresses the fact that Arab authors indicate Mu'an as the seat of a Byzantine governor (whom Krivov identifies with Farva). And Mu'an, in his opinion, should

[96] J. Wiewiorowski, *Sądownictwo*..., p. 276.

[97] M.V. Krivov, *Sraženie*..., p. 103: *...арабские авторы прилагают титулы «сахиб»* (صاحى) *и«малик»* (ملك)*, в равной степени способные обзначать как независимого или бассально правителя, так и наместника, Фарве в источинках примиеним термин «амиль»*(عامل)*. Это слово, в буквальном означаюшее «человека, находящегося на чьей-ливо служ̧бе, правителя от чьего-ливо имиени», здесь может обозначать только наместника.*

[98] M.V. Krivov, *Sraženie*..., p. 103: *Таким образом, имеется много даннух за то, чтобу считат викария Феодора и Фарву-ибн-ʿАмра ал-Джузамй однум и тем же лицо.*

be equated with Moucheon where, according to Theophanes, vicarius Theodorus stayed[99].

In his article the Russian scholar also deals with a remark, to be found in *the Book of Notification and Verification* by Al-Masʿūdī, that a certain "patricius Tiaducus" participated in the battle of Mu'ta on the Greek side. Krivov revises the opinion, formed as far back as the nineteenth century by a French orientalist and lexicographer, Caussin de Perceval, that this "patricius Tiaducus" was actually vicarius Theodore whom we know from the work by Theophanes. Relying on the linguistic argumentation, the Russian scholar says that one can think of only two Greek names – *Theodochus* and *Theodectus* – that could have been distorted in Arabic into Tiaducus (the name Theodorus should rather be transformed into Taudurus or Tudurus). To conclude, Krivov is of the opinion that this "patricius Tiaducus" was a commander of a Greek unit fighting in the battle of Mu'ta, while Farva, holding the high rank of vicarius, was placed in charge of all Greek and Arab troops who participated in the clash in question[100].

Krivov's original interpretation should be confronted with the way in which modern scholarship views the problem of a relation between Arab sources and the writings of Theophanes. It is a complex issue and the discussion it provoked still remains inconclusive. However, the long held view is that Theophanes' work was influenced by the Arabic literary tradition – an influence which is seen, for example, in its account of the Byzantine-Arab relations. One of the issues that figures prominently in the discussion concerns an unclear way of transmitting the Arab viewpoint to Theophanes' work. In this context, Christian literature written in Syriac is indicated as a medium through which Muslim texts could find their way to the Greek chronicle. The so-called eastern source, which is thought to have originated in the region of Syria, is also often mentioned as a text to which the work of the Greek author is indebted. However, no definite and widely accepted answer pointing to some specific source has so far been given – in spite of the fact that the attempts to find it have continued incessantly since a distinguished philologist and Byzantinist, Karl Krumbacher (1856–1909), started his research into the problem in the nineteenth century[101].

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[99] M.V. Krivov, *Sraženie...*, p. 98 (n. 20). Krivov rejects the opinion once held by a Dutch Orientalist Michael Jan de Goeje (*Mémoire...*, p. 7), according to whom Moucheon needs to be equated with present Mo'ab.

[100] M.V. Krivov, *Sraženie...*, p. 102. See: A.P. Caussin de Perceval, *Essai sur l'histoire des Arabes avant l'islamisme, pendant l'époque de Mahomet et jusqu'à la réduction de toutes les tribus sous la loi musulmane*, vol. III, Paris 1848, p. 211–212; M.J. de Goeje, *Mémoire...*, p. 6.

[101] Cf. E.W. Brooks, *The Sources of Theophanes and the Syriac Chronicle*, BZ 15, 1906, p. 578–587; N. Pigulevskaja, *Theophanes' Chronographia and the Syrian Chronicles*, JÖB

According to Lawrence I. Conrad, who has recently devoted much attention to Theophanes' account of the battle of Mu'ta, the narrative of the Byzantine chronicler displays strong connection with the Arab sources, to which the Greek author must have had access through Syriac texts. Conrad argues, among other things, that the name of the Byzantine informant, Koutabas, is a distorted version of the Arab Qutayba or Quṭba. In referring to the ethnic group to which Koutabas belonged, Theophanes relied on what appears to be a distortion of the Arab word Quraish, meaning the Quraish tribe. According to Conrad, there is nothing unusual about mistakes made by Greek authors in transcribing Arab proper names, and one can presume that such mistakes were made in the case under discussion[102]. The line of reasoning developed by Conrad supports the idea put forward by Krivov – a fact of which the former may be unaware, since the latter's views, probably because of the language barrier, remain almost completely unknown among scholars in the West[103].

Linguistic arguments supporting the view that *Chronographia* remains under direct influence of Arab writings that infiltrated it without the mediation of Syrian sources have recently been presented by Maria Conterno. Transcribed into Greek, proper names appear in Theophanes in brief and simplified form, phonetically resembling, so the argument goes, Arabic words. However, the name Farva is absent from a great number of examples the Italian scholar provides[104]. This may result from the fact that the case under discussion does not

16, 1967, p. 55–60; A. Proudfoot, *The Sources of Theophanes for the Heraclian Dynasty*, B 44, 1974, p. 367–439; *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284–813*, ed. and transl. by C. Mango, R. Scott, G. Greatrex, Oxford 1997, p. XXIV–XCI; L.I. Conrad, *Theophanes and the Arabic Historical Tradition: Some Indications of Intercultural Transmission*, BF 15, 1990, p. 1–44 [=*Theophanes and the Arabic Historical Tradition: Some Indications of Intercultural Transmission*, [in:] *Arab-Byzantine Relations in Early Islamic Times*, ed. M. Bonner, Burlington 2009].

[102] L.I. Conrad, *Theophanes...*, p. 21–26.

[103] Only English editors of the English translation of Theophanes' chronicle, Mango and Scott, in referring to the fragment under consideration, take the views held by the Russian scholar on the identification of Moucheon into account. However, they make no comment on the interpretation put forward by Krivov and leave the issue of Theodorius' identity unresolved. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor...*, p. 467, n. 2.

[104] M. Conterno, *Theophilos, "the more likely candidate"? Towards a Reappraisal of the Question of Theophanes' "Oriental Source(s)"*, [in:] *The Chronicle of Theophanes: Sources, Composition and Transmission. An International Workshop, Paris, 14th–15th September 2012* (soon to be published in TM, the paper was delivered during the Paris conference. Citation from the paper delivered during the conference): "Whereas in Syriac the formula is translated, in Greek the name is written as it sounds in Arabic: 'Abdallah ibn 'Alī (علي بن الله عبد) becomes

look like a simplification or abbreviation of the Arab term; a clear phonetic similarity between the two does not exist, either. Thus, if there can be no doubt that Theophanes drew on the sources of Arab provenance or that he distorted Arab proper names – both are in line with Krivov's interpretation – then the way in which these names were modified, clearly and convincingly set forth by Conterno, does not support his opinions. It should be added that Krivov's philological analysis of Theophanes' text is not as thorough as that carried out by Conterno – his does not go beyond the indication of some factual congruence between the *Chronographia* and a number of Arab sources.

With regard to this linguistic aspect of the problem one might add that Theodorus is a typically Greek name, highly popular in late antiquity – we know about 207 officials by whom it was borne[105]. For example, Theodore, Emperor Heraclius' brother[106], is known to have fought with the Arabs in the battle of Ajnadayn in 634. Another Theodore, nicknamed Trithyrius, *magister militum per Orientem*[107], was in command of the Byzantine troops during the battle at the river Yarmuk in 636. Thus it should not be found too surprising to learn that one more military commander by this name took part in the battle of Mu'ta. It is unlikely that Theophanes confused the Theodore of Mu'ta with one of those whom I have mentioned first, for he knew about them much more than he did about him.

Little is known about Farva himself, which of course does not make it easier for one to give one's own opinion of the interpretation put forward by Krivov. Apart from the name of the tribe to which this Arab belonged, the only known detail from his biography concerns his alleged conversion to Islam – a step which he is thought to have taken as a Christian and for which he was sentenced to death by Emperor Heraclius. However, even if this was the case, and scholars are doubtful of this conversion, it is difficult to say when and why he did it[108].

According to Walter Emil Kaegi, the author of an important monograph on the early Arab conquests, Theodore served as the overall commander of the Byzantine troops, meaning the Arab allies and some small contingents sent from Constantinople. In addition, he bore the honorary title of *vicarius*, which, in Kaegi's opinion, can hardly strike us as odd in the era known for having titles

'Abdallah bar 'Alī [...], but is 'Ιβναίλμ in Theophanes; 'Yazıď ibn Hubayrah (هبيرة بن يزيد) becomes Yazīd bar Hūbayrā [...] in Syriac, but is 'Ιβινουβειρα in Theophanes...".

[105] *PLRE* IIIB, p. 1244–1289.

[106] *PLRE* IIIB, p. 1277–1279 (*Theodorus 163*).

[107] *PLRE* IIIB, p. 1279–1280 (*Theodorus 164 qui et Trithyrius*).

[108] F.M. Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquest*, Princeton 1981, p. 105, p. 304, n. 53; W.E. Kaegi, *Byzantium*..., p. 68–69.

connected with old civilian offices such as *patricius, cubicularius or sacellarius* conferred on army commanders[109].

In developing his argument, Kaegi relies only on contextual knowledge, for, as he maintains, there exist neither historical nor archaeological sources to be adduced in proof of the existence, in Heraclius' reign or earlier, of some permanent military bases near the area of the battle in question. This scholar is of the opinion that the clash took place in the region where Byzantine authorities were seeking to restore imperial administration after twenty years of Persian rule (under the agreement of July 629, the Persians were supposed to withdraw their troops to Egypt, Syria and Palestine). However, it was out of the question for the Byzantines to seize full control of the areas east of Jordan. In the absence of large, regular Byzantine units stationed in the area, the authorities returned to the policy of forming alliances with Arab tribes, to be entrusted with the task of defending the province against those of their kinsmen whom the Empire was unable to bring under control. This practice can account for the presence of *vicarius* Theodore, who remained in charge of the Arab forces gathered in the region of Mu'ta[110].

Kaegi's views are similar to those presented in the prosopography of the late Roman Empire edited by Martindale[111], to which I have repeatedly referred here. Martindale provides one more example of the sixth-century anonymous official whom the sources describe as vicarius of *Palaestina Secunda* (*vicarius Palaestinae Secundae*). According to the English scholar this official was *vicarius loci servator*, that is, a representative of the Prefect of the East responsible for the administration of the fiscal system in the province mentioned above[112]. By analogy, it can be presumed that vicarius Theodore, acting either as a representative of a high ranking official (prefect of praetorium or governor of a province) or as an imperial envoy, was entrusted with the conduct of some specific military tasks.

None of the authors with whom I am familiar comments on the information provided by George Cedrenus that Theodore was *cubicularius* (Martindale mentions this in passing in an entry devoted to Theodorus). At first sight, Cedrenus' account seems to be unreliable. Based on unknown sources, it was brought into being much later than that written by Theophanes. On the other hand, however, the role of *cubiculariuses* is known to have evolved. Serving as emperors' personal

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109 W.E. K a e g i, *Byzantium…*, p. 33–34, 79.

110 *Ibidem*, p. 72–73.

111 *PLRE* IIIB, p. 1277 (*Theodorus 162*). See also: A. S t r a t o s, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, vol. I, Amsterdam 1968, p. 313–314.

112 *PLRE* IIIB, p. 1435–1436 (*Anonymus 47*).

servants in the initial phase of the late Roman Empire, in the seventh century they were given different administrative roles outside the imperial court – for example, *cubicularius* Andrew was sent as an envoy to caliph Muʿāwiya I (661–680) in Damascus. They also served as governors of particular provinces and as military commanders[113].

Army commanders in Syro-Palestine provinces

Dionysius, dux of Phoenicia
[Dionysius, *dux Phoenices*]
528

Dionysius, dux of Phoenicia, was one of the six regional military leaders whom Justinian I sent in pursuit of an Arab tribe leader, Al-Mundhir, a Persian supporter. Warned of Dionysius' expedition, Al-Mundhir retreated deep into his own territory. The Byzantines seized his camp, taking a number of prisoners and acquiring significant booty, including camels and other animals. The Byzantines returned to the Empire in April 628 with a number of Saracens and Persians whom they captured after burning four Persian fortresses[114].

Proclianus, dux of Phoenicia
[Proclianus, *dux Phoenices*]
528

Proclianus was sent by Justinian I to fight, along with six other military leaders, against the Persians operating in Mesopotamia under the command of Xerxes,

[113] See. A. Kazhdan, *ODB* II, p. 1154 (*koubikoularios*). Theophanes, AM 6159 (on *cubicularius* Andrew).

[114] John Malalas, XVIII, 16; καὶ εὐθέως ἀπελθόντες Ἀρέθας ὁ φύλαρχος καὶ Γνούφας καὶ Ναамὰν καὶ Διονύσιος ὁ δοὺξ Φοινίκης καὶ Ἰωάννης ὁ τῆς Εὐφρατησίας καὶ Σεβαστιανὸς ὁ χιλίαρχος μετὰ τῆς στρατιωτικῆς βοηθείας… καὶ εἰσελθόντες οἱ δοῦκες Ῥωμαίων καὶ οἱ φύλαρχοι μετὰ βοηθείας συνεπομένης, καὶ μηδαμοῦ αὐτὸν καταλαβόντες, ὥρμησαν ἐπὶ τὰ Περσικὰ μέρη, καὶ παρέλαβον τὰς σκηνὰς αὐτοῦ, καὶ αἰχμαλώτους δὲ ἔλαβον πλῆθος ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν καὶ παιδίων καὶ ὅσας εὗρον καμήλους δρομωναρίας καὶ ἄλλα διάφορα κτήνη. ἔκαυσαν δὲ καὶ κάστρα Περσικὰ τέσσαρα παραλαβόντες καὶ τοὺς ἐν αὐτοῖς ὄντας Σαρακηνούς τε καὶ Πέρσας, καὶ ὑπέστρεψαν εἰς τὰ Ῥωμαϊκὰ μετὰ νίκης. See also: Theophanes, AM 6021 (he does not mention the dux of Phoenicia by name). See: *PLRE* IIIA, p. 403 (*Dionysius 1*).

King Kavad's son. He was killed during the battle with the Persians, probably as a result of the fall from his horse. Malalas' narrative suggests that his expedition took place after dux Dionysius' return from the campaign against Al-Mundhir, but still in the same year[115].

Buzes, dux in Lebanese Phoenicia
[Buzes, *dux Phoenices Libanensis*]
528

He was one of the two commanders (Cutzes was the other one) stationed with the army in Lebanon whom the emperor sent to support Belisarius after he was attacked by the Persians in northern Mesopotamia at Mindouos – where the Byzantines were erecting a fortress. The forces led by Buzes and Cutzes clashed with the Persians and lost[116].

The identification of the office held by Buzes is hypothetical only. Procopius uses the phrase – *at that time* [Buzes – PF] *commanded the soldiers in Libanus* – which, according to Martindale, means the commandant of Phoenicia Lebanese. However, it should not be forgotten that there is a hypothesis according to which the province was divided by Justinian I into two smaller military regions (see the first part of this chapter characterising the territorial division of military administration) with headquarters located respectively in Damascus and Palmyra. Since another source, in discussing the events of 528, refers to Cutzes as an ex-dux of Damascus[117], a city that lies in the province of Phoenicia Lebanese, Buzes, according to Martindale, should be deemed to have been based in another "garrison" city of the province, that is, in Palmyra[118].

Buzes and Cutzes were brothers versed in the art of war. They came from Thrace. The former's career after 528, that is, after the battle of Mindouos, has been reconstructed in greater detail: he took part in the battle of Dara in June 530; in 531 he remained in charge of Roman garrisons in Amida and Martyropolis; the commander of a military expedition to Armenia in 539, in 540 he was

[115] J o h n M a l a l a s, XVIII, 26; ἐξῆλθον δὲ κατὰ τοῦ Μέραν καὶ Ξέρξου ὁ ἀπὸ δουκῶν Δαμασκοῦ Κουζτὶς ὁ Βιταλιανοῦ, ἀνὴρ μαχιμώτατος, καὶ Σεβαστιανὸς μετὰ τῆς ᾿Ισαυρικῆς χειρὸς καὶ Προκλιανὸς ὁ δοὺξ Φοινίκης καὶ Βασίλειος ὁ κόμης. ἦν δὲ καὶ Βελισάριος μετ᾽ αὐτῶν καὶ Ταφαρὰς ὁ φύλαρχος. τοῦ δὲ ἵππου Ταφαρᾶ προσκόψαντος κατενεχθεὶς ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν ἐσφάγη, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ Προκλιανός. See: *PLRE* IIIB, p. 1059 (*Proclianus*).

[116] P r o c o p i u s, *De bellis*, I, 13: ἄλλην τε στρατιὰν ἐπήγγελλεν αὐτόσε ἰέναι καὶ Κούτζην τε καὶ Βούζην, οἳ τῶν ἐν Λιβάνῳ στρατιωτῶν ἦρχον τότε (transl. H.B. D e w i n g, p. 103).

[117] J o h n M a l a l a s, XVIII, 26.

[118] *PLRE* IIIA, p. 255 (*Buzes*).

appointed, along with Belisarius, commander-in-chief of the army of the East (*magister militum per Orientem*) with the right to command the troops in a region stretching between the river Euphrates and the Persian border and, temporarily – until Belisarius' return from Italy – in all the regions placed under military command of *magister militum per Orientem*. In 541 and 542 he participated in military operations against the Persians at Hierapolis, Edessa and Nisibis. It is in that last year that he may have been endowed with the honorary title of consul. Charged with disloyalty to the emperor, he was thrown into prison in Constantinople, his incarceration lasting probably from the end of 542 to the beginning of 545. In 549 he fought in Europe against the Gepids and in the years 554–556, serving as *magister militum per Lazicam*, remained in charge of military operations conducted on the Persian front in Lazica[119].

Cutzes, dux in Lebanese Phoenicia
[Cutzes, *dux Phoenices Libanensis*]
528

One of the two commanders stationed with the army in Lebanon, he was sent to help Belisarius struggling with the Persians at Mindouos in Mesopotamia. As we know, the forces of Buzes and Cutzes suffered defeat at the hands of the Persians. According to Procopius, Cutzes was taken prisoner and incarcerated, along with other Byzantines, in Persia[120]. Pseudo-Zacharias' account differs from Procopius in that it states that Cutzes was killed in the battle against the Persians[121]. Malalas describes him as an excellent soldier[122].

Diomedes, silentarius, dux of Palestine
[Diomedes, *silentarius, dux Palaestinae*]
528

Dux of Palestine and silentarius, Diomedes is known for his conflict with the Arab phylarch, Arethas, Byzantium's ally[123]. No source explains the reasons

[119] *PLRE* IIIA, p. 254–257 (*Buzes*) – containing detailed source references.

[120] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 13: ἄλλην τε στρατιὰν ἐπήγγελλεν αὐτόσε ἰέναι καὶ Κούτζην τε καὶ Βούζην, οἳ τῶν ἐν Λιβάνῳ στρατιωτῶν ἦρχον τότε.

[121] Pseudo-Zachariah, IX, 2.

[122] John Malalas, XVIII, 26 (see footnote no. 193). See also: *PLRE* IIIA, p. 366 (*Cutzes*).

[123] John Malalas, XVIII, 16: συνέβη ἔχθραν γενέσθαι τοῦ δουκὸς Παλαιστίνης Διομήδου σιλεντιαρίου μετὰ τοῦ φυλάρχου ᾿Αρέθα. See also: Theophanes, AM 6021: ὁ δοὺξ Παλαιστίνης ἐποίησεν ἔχθραν μετὰ τοῦ φυλάρχου τῶν ὑπὸ Ρωμαίους Σαρακηνῶν.

for the strife. If the term *Palaestina* attached to the function exercised by this official pertains to a province, then it should be assumed to refer to *Palaestina Tertia*. For, as we know from Malalas, Aretas, because of the conflict with the phylarch, left the Byzantine territory crossing the *limes*, and *Palaestina Tertia* was the only Palestine province coterminous with the Arab territories. However, the term in question may refer to the historico-geographical region and, as such, should be understood as designating the area larger than that which forms one Palestinian administrative unit.

The function of *silentarius* was bound up with the imperial court in Constantinople (the officer called the meetings of the Imperial Council, called Consistory, and served as a member of a unit protecting the emperor during military campaigns) and those who exercised it bore, beginning in the fifth century, the honorary rank of *spectabiles*. Later, that is, towards the end of the sixth century, the post became purely titular and was no longer connected with any real administrative function[124].

Diomedes served as dux in 528. From this it follows that either his title *silentarius* was only titular – which would mean that the post became titular earlier than has so far been assumed – and he actually confined himself to discharging the duties of a dux (such an interpretation is suggested by a literal reading of Malalas' account) or he first served as *silentarius* and was only later appointed to the position of Palestinian dux.

Flavius Anastasius, honorary consul, dux of Arabia
[Flavius Anastasius, *consul, dux Arabiae*]
c. 528–529

Known from one inscription discovered in Qasr el-Hallabat (Jordan) in the Byzantine province of Arabia, Flavius must have served as dux, holding the honorary title of consul. That he kept his post in Arabia is assumed to be implicitly indicated by the fact that the inscription containing information about him was found in this province. It is dated to the period between September 528 and August 529.

According to Martindale, Anastasius may be identified with the official whom I have already described above and who appears in a number of other sources (see above the part devoted to provincial governors). If we are actually

[124] A. Kazhdan, *ODB* III, p. 1896 [s.v. *silentiarios*].

dealing here with one and the same person, then his career must have proceeded in the following way: he served as dux of Arabia from 529 to 533, and as governor (*praeses*) of Arabia from 532 to 533[125].

John, dux of Palestine
[Ioannes, *dux Palaestinae*]
529–530

He is briefly mentioned by one source reporting that the most venerable Theodore and John were ordered to raise an army and attack Samaritans. This remark is to be found in the *Life of saint Saba* by Cyril of Scythopolis (the mid-sixth century)[126].

It does not follow from the text that John and Theodore resided in the province in question and served as commanders of its army. Quite the contrary, the source seems to point to an *ad hoc* intervention conducted by commanders who – judging by the honorary rank of ἐνδοξότατος – *gloriosissimus* bestowed on *magistri militum* (Masters of the Soldiers) or other functionaries higher than duces – usually stayed outside the province, including at the imperial court. However, Martindale is of the opinion that John held the honorary title of *magister militum* and – hypothetically – served, along with Theodore, as dux of Palestina[127]. This presumption, so Martindale's argument goes, is in line with the policy pursued by Justinian I who aimed to divide the command of the provincial army – the case regarding Phoenicia Lebanese (duces based in Damascus and in Palmyra) discussed above clearly was not an isolated one. Besides, Martindale indicates a similar example (the one relating to Ireneus and Theodotus) derived from the region of Palestine and concerning almost the same period (the end of 529 and 530)[128].

[125] *PLRE* IIIA, p. 62 (*Fl. Anastasios 3*):
Φ[λαυίου] Αναστασίου ὑπερφυες(τάτου) καὶ πανευφ(ήμου) ἀπό ὑπάτων κ(αὶ) δοὺξ]

[126] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae*, 70: τούτων οὖν ἀπάντων εἰς ἀκοὰς ἐλθόντων τοῦ εὐσεβεστάτου ἡμῶν βασιλέως ᾿Ιουστινιανοῦ ἐκελεύσθησαν Θεόδωρος καὶ ᾿Ιωάννης οἱ ἐνδοξότατοι στρατὸν συναγεῖραι.

[127] *PLRE* IIIA, p. 626 (*Ioannes 8*).

[128] *PLRE* IIIB, p. 1300 (*Theodotus qui et Magalas 1*).

Theodore, dux of Palestine
[Theodorus, *dux Palaestinae*]
529

Theodore is known from the remark, mentioned above, about raising an army and launching an expedition against the Samaritans found in the *Life of saint Saba* by Cyril of Scythopolis[129], as well as from a number of passages included in Malalas' chronicle describing the rebellion staged by Samaritans in 529, and from one brief reference made by Pseudo-Zacharias. Having learned that Julian, a leader of the rebels – says Malalas – caused the death of a local bishop and ordered the execution of a victorious chariot driver in Neapolis just because this driver was a Christian, governors of Palaestina, along with the dux Theodore known by a nickname "snub-nosed", quickly filed a report to Emperor Justinian informing him of Julian's misconduct. Having significant forces at their disposal, the dux, along with the phylarch of Palestina, set out to fight against Julian. A battle ensued, and resulted in Julian's capture and beheading. His head was then sent to the emperor[130].

Theodore was involved in carrying out military operations against the Samaritans who were seeking shelter south of Neapolis, in the vicinity of the Mount Gerizim, and in the region of the Trachon situated a little south of Damascus. However, accused of passivity and of failure to prevent the destruction of land estates in Palestine, as well as the seizure of Neapolis by the Samaritans in the initial phase of the revolt, he was dismissed from office by the emperor, ending up in custody[131].

The association of Theodore with the rebellion of the Samaritans which broke out in May 529 and which must have been crushed a few months later[132], towards the end of that year, implies dating the dux's term in office to 529[133].

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[129] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae*, 70.

[130] John Malalas, XVIII, 35: τοῦτο δὲ γνόντες οἱ ἄρχοντες Παλαιστίνης καὶ ὁ δοὺξ Θεόδωρος ὁ σιμὸς. See also: Pseudo-Zachariah, IX, 8.

[131] John Malalas, XVIII, 35.

[132] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae*, 70: the rebellion broke out four months from 11th of January of the seventh indiction, that is, from 11th of January 529.

[133] *PLRE* IIIB, p. 1245–1246 (*Theodorus* 5).

Theodotus „Magalas”, dux of Palestine
[Theodotus qui et Magalas, *dux Palaestinae*]
529/530

Information about Theodotus appears with regard to the same circumstances (the rebellion of the Samaritans) in the *Excerpta de insidiis*, that is, a collection of excerpts from a variety of ancient works, including fragments of Malalas' chronicle, compiled at the order of emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus. Placed in charge of significant forces, Theodotus acted alongside Ireneus, ex-prefect, whom the emperor himself sent to Palestine after receiving information about the outbreak of the rebellion under consideration. This Theodotus was nicknamed Magalas[134].

As Martindale remarked[135], the account found in the *Excerpta* remains at odds with the account given by Malalas, according to whom the uprising was suppressed by John, Theodorus (presented above) and an anonymous Palestinian phylarch. In the opinion of this scholar, Ireneus was sent from Constantinople, probably at the end of 529, to replace Theodorus as dux of Palestine. In the year that followed he continued the campaign launched by Theodore, relying on the assistance of the second dux of Palestine, Theodotus *Magalas* (the nickname is impossible to translate). As I have mentioned above, this way of dividing military power was practised in some provinces. If this interpretation is correct, then Ireneus and Theodotus should be considered to have replaced John and Theodore as Palestinian duces.

Ireneus, dux of Palestine
[Irenaeus, *dux Palaestinae*]
529

The son of one Pentadia, Ireneus came from Antioch. In his capacity as comes of the East he may have suppressed the riots which broke out in 507 in Antioch[136]. In 528 he was one of the three military commanders sent to

[134] Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *De insidiis*, 44, p. 171–172: μαθὼν δὲ ταῦτα ᾿Ιουστινιανὸς ἔπεμψεν Εἰρηναῖον τὸν ἀπὸ ἐπάρχων τὸν Πενταδίας, δεδωκὼς αὐτῷ ἐξουσίαν ὥστε γράψαι τοῖς κατὰ τόπον ἄρχουσιν. καὶ ἀγαγὼν αὐτοὺς μετὰ βοηθείας ἤγαγε Θεόδοτον δοῦκα Παλαιστίνης τὸν ἐπίκλην Μάγαλαν μετὰ πολλοῦ πλήθους καὶ ἑτέρους πολλούς, ὥστε ὁπλίσασθαι κατὰ τῶν Σαμαρειτῶν.

[135] *PLRE* IIIB, p. 1300–1301 (*Theodotus qui et Magalas*).

[136] John Malalas, XVI, 6: ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς ᾿Αναστάσιος διδαχθεὶς προεχειρίσατο κόμητα ἀνατολῆς Εἰρηναῖον τὸν Πενταδιαστήν, ᾿Αντιοχέα. See: *PLRE* II, p. 625 (*Irenaeus qui est Pentadiastes*); P. Filipczak, *Władze państwowe*..., p. 42–44.

Lazica with a view of supporting the local ruler, Ztatios. The commanders argued with one another and the campaign ended in failure. For this reason the emperor decided to dismiss all three of them[137]. According to Martindale, Ireneus exercised the function of *comes rei militaris* or *magister utriusque militiae per Orientem*[138].

Malalas' chronicle clearly indicates that in 529 Ireneus was appointed to the position of dux of Palaestina, replacing Theodore whom Justinian I dismissed for failing to react promptly to the outbreak of the Samaritans' rebellion. He may have later also held the post of prefect of the East (*praefectus praetorio per Orientem*)[139]. In the *Easter Chronicle* he is referred to as strategist whom the emperor sent, as the chronicle's narrative suggests, from Constantinople to Syria to stifle the rebellion raised by the Samaritans. The description provided by the *Easter Chronicle* appears to be a simplified view of the events recounted in more detail by Malalas. The English editors of the *Easter Chronicle* probably erroneously regard Ireneus as *magister militum*[140].

Procopius of Caesarea may have also referred to the dux in question when writing about Justinian I's illegal confiscation of the property of a long deceased Irenaeus[141]. If this is the case, then relying on this source, written in the summer of 550[142], we can say that Ireneus must have died approximately during the 30s or 40s of the sixth century.

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[137] John Malalas, XVIII, 4; Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 12 (Ireneus is referred to simply as "archon"): στράτευμά τε καὶ Εἰρηναῖον ἄρχοντα πέμψας. See also: Theophanes, AM 6020 (a reiteration of the account by Malalas); John of Nikiu, XL (ed. Zotenberg, p. 389).

[138] *PLRE* II, p. 625–626 (*Irenaeus 7*). The office referred to in the English translation of Malalas (Scott-Jeffreys, 1986, p. 246) is *magister militum*.

[139] John Malalas, XVIII, 35: καὶ διαδεξάμενος τὸν αὐτὸν δοῦκα ἀσχήμως ἐκέλευσεν αὐτὸν ἀσφαλισθέντα φυλάττεσθαι. καὶ ἐπέμφθη ἀντ' αὐτοῦ δοὺξ Εἰρηναῖος, ᾿Αντιοχεύς· ὅστις ὁρμήσας κατὰ τῶν ἀπομεινάντων Σαμαρειτῶν ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσι, πολλοὺς ἀπώλεσε πικρῶς τιμωρησάμενος. See also: *De insidiis*, 44, p. 171–172. See also: *PLRE* II, p. 625–626 (*Irenaeus 7*).

[140] *Paschal Chronicle*, s.a 530, p. 619: Τούτῳ τῷ ἔτει Σαμαρειτῶν στασιασάντων, καὶ ποιησάντων ἑαυτοῖς βασιλέα καὶ Καίσαρα, ἐπέμφθη Εἰρηναῖος ὁ Πενταδίας στρατηλάτης, καὶ ἐθανάτωσε πολλοῖς (see also translation by M. Whitby, M. Whitby, p. 111).

[141] Procopius, *Anecdota*, 29.

[142] P. Janiszewski, *Historiografia późnego antyku (The Historiography of the Late Antiquity)*, [in:] *Vademecum Historyka Starożytnej Grecji i Rzymu (Vade mecum for the Historian of the ancient Greece and Rome)*. Vol. III – *Źródłoznawstwo czasów późnego antyku*, ed. E. Wipszycka, Warszawa 1999, p. 52.

Aratius, dux of Palestine
[Aratius, *dux Palaestinae*]
c. 535–536

Coming from Persarmenia (the region of the Lake Urmia, north-western Iran, in 387 it came under Persian rule), he successfully fought against Belisarius and Sitthas during their intervention in the region which probably took place in 527, certainly not long before the emperor's death (1 August 527)[143]. He fled from Persarmenia to Byzantium, along with his mother and his brother Narses, where he was hosted by another Narses, a high ranking official (*saccellarius* and *praepositus of the sacred bedchamber* in the years 530–531)[144] who also came from Persarmenia[145].

Aratius served as dux of Palestine, as is apparent from the panegyric by Choricius of Gaza[146] devoted to him and Stephen, the governor of Arabia. The duration of his term in office is uncertain. He is likely to have kept his post before 1 July 536 (he is thought to have been dux of Palestine at the same time as Stephen served as consular of this province, see respective paragraphs above) or even as early as 535[147].

The same source informs us that Aratius managed, without the use of force, to extinguish religious disturbances that broke out in the vicinity of Palestinian Caesarea[148] and captured one of the provincial fortresses occupied by the barbarians – probably by the Arabs – and considered impossible to conquer[149]. We also know that he recaptured a mountain pass from the hands of the Arabs while relying on a unit of less than two hundred men[150] and retook the island Iotabe (today Tiran on the Red Sea near the coast of the Sinai Peninsula) by attacking a fortress, probably an Arab one, situated on the mainland. On Iotabe he established a customs station[151]. Choricius describes Aratius as an able and reliable man, lenient in administrative and honest in financial matters[152].

His military career has been precisely reconstructed by Martindale: in Italy he fought with the Goths under Belisarius (in the years 538–540, probably as

[143] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 12, 20.
[144] *PLRE* IIIB, p. 912 (*Narses 1*).
[145] Procopius, *De bellis*, I, 15, 31.
[146] Choricius of Gaza, III, title: εἰς ᾿Αράτιον δοῦκα καὶ Στέφανον ἄρχοντα
[147] *PLRE* IIIA, p. 103 (*Aratius*).
[148] Choricius of Gaza, III, 10–18.
[149] Choricius of Gaza, III, 20–27.
[150] Choricius of Gaza, III, 28–33.
[151] Choricius of Gaza, III, 66–78.
[152] Choricius of Gaza, III, 3, 7.

magister utriusquae militiae or *comes rei militaris*); in the Balkan Peninsula he was involved in the military operations against the Slavs and Gepids (the end of the 40s and during 50s of the sixth century); later, Justianian designated him to conduct negotiations with the Huns (551). He was killed in 552 in Illyricum during the campaign against the Gepids[153].

Theoctistus, dux in Phoenicia Lebanese
[Theoctistus, *dux Phoenices Libanensis*]
540/543

The commanders of the troops in Lebanon – writes Procopius – Theoctistus and Molatzes, leading six thousand soldiers, arrived in Antioch in 540 on the eve of the assault launched on the city by the Persian troops led by Chosroes[154]. During the assault both Theoctistus and Moratzes suddenly left Antioch, wrongly assuming that the city's walls had suffered some damage and were about to collapse altogether, thus opening the way for the enemy to seize control of the city[155].

In 541 *the commanders of the troops in Lebanon* Theoctistus and Recitangus refused to follow Belisarius' order to participate in the invasion of the Persian Mesopotamia. They argued that such a step would leave Syria and Phoenicia defenseless and vulnerable to the ravaging attack by the Arab military leader and the Persians' ally, Al-Mundhir[156]. However, they decided to accompany Belisarius on his mission after he assured them that they would return to Syria in less than sixty days[157]. After this period elapsed, both commanders asked for permission to return into the borders of the Empire, presenting their demand as the situation of the Roman army was becoming increasingly difficult[158].

In 543 Theoctistus, along with other military leader Ildiger (the sources do not specify the offices held by either of them) and *magister militum per*

[153] *PLRE* IIIA, p. 103–104 (*Aratius*).

[154] P r o c o p i u s, *De bellis*, II, 8, 2: εἰ μὴ μεταξὺ ἥκοντες οἱ τῶν ἐν Λιβάνῳ στρατιωτῶν ἄρχοντες, Θεόκτιστός τε καὶ Μολάτζης, ξὺν ἑξακισχιλίοις ἀνδράσιν ἐλπίσι τε αὐτοὺς ἐπιρρώσαντες διεκώλυσαν (transl. H.B. D e w i n g, p. 325).

[155] P r o c o p i u s, *De bellis*, II, 8, 17.

[156] P r o c o p i u s, *De bellis*, II, 16, 17: Ῥεκίθαγγος μέντοι καὶ Θεόκτιστος, οἱ τῶν ἐν Λιβάνῳ στρατιωτῶν ἄρχοντες (transl. H.B. D e w i n g, p. 401).

[157] P r o c o p i u s, *De bellis*, II, 16, 18.

[158] P r o c o p i u s, *De bellis*, II, 19, 33.

Orientem arrived at the fortress of Citharizon, in the eastern part of Asia Minor[159]. Theoctistus is highly likely to have later taken part in the campaign against the Persians (Procopius of Caesarea, the only author contemporary with these events no longer refers to him by name) near Anglon[160].

According to Martindale, Theoctistus, along with all the commanders mentioned above: with Molatzes, later with Recticanus and finally with Ildiger, held the office of dux based in Phoenicia Lebanese, a province in which the command of the army was divided at the beginning of Justinian's reign between two officials. About 570 Theoctistus served as commander-in-chief of the African army and was then killed while fighting against the Moors[161].

Molatzes, dux in Phoenicia Lebanese
[Molatzes, *dux Phoenices Libanensis*]
540

Information about Molatzes appears in two source references concerning Theoctistus described above, in which Molatzes is referred to as the commander of the army in Lebanon. He is known to have arrived in Antioch in 540, on the eve of the Persian assault on the city, leading six thousand soldiers. Mislead into thinking that the walls of Antioch attacked by the Persian king Chosroes were about to collapse, he left the city[162].

Given the above, Molatzes is believed to have served (along with Theoctistus) as dux of Phoenicia Lebanese in 540 (in accordance with the division of the military command of the army in this province between two officials)[163].

Recitangus, dux in Phoenicia Lebanese
[Rhecithangus, *dux Phoenices Libanensis*]
541

Recitangus appears in the above mentioned references concerning Theoctistus, along with whom he is described as the commander of the army in Lebanon.

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[159] Procopius, *De bellis*, II, 24, 13: Μαρτῖνος δὲ ὁ τῆς ἕω στρατηγὸς ξύν τε Ἰλδίγερι καὶ Θεοκτίστῳ ἐς Κιθαρίζων τὸ φρούριον ἀφικόμενος ἐνταῦθά τε πηξάμενος τὸ στρατόπεδον αὐτοῦ ἔμεινε.

[160] Procopius, *De bellis*, II, 25, 5–35.

[161] *PLRE* IIIB, p. 1226–1227 (*Theoctistus 2*).

[162] Procopius, *De bellis*, II, 8, 2. See also: Procopius, *De bellis*, II, 8, 17.

[163] *PLRE* IIIB, p. 894–895 (*Molatzes*).

Fearful of the pillage of Syria by Al-Mundhir, an Arab leader allied with the Persians, he initially refused to join the anti-Persian expedition, changing his mind only after he received assurances from Belisarius that he would be allowed to return to Syria within sixty days of the launch of the whole operation. After the appointed time elapsed, he asked for permission to return[164].

Based on the above, Recitangus (along with Theoctistus) is believed to have served as dux of Phoenicia Lebanese in 541 (in accordance with the division of the command of the army stationed in this province between two officials, see above)[165]. About 539 he may have participated in the military campaigns in the territory of Lazica. Killed in Illyricum in 552, in the campaign against the Gepids[166], he is described by Procopius as a *man of discretion and a capable warrior*[167].

Ildiger, dux in Phoenicia Lebanese
[Ildiger, *dux Phoenices Libanensis*]
543

We owe our knowledge of the details of his career to Procopius of Caesarea. His name indicates German origin. Son-in-law of Belisarius' wife, Antonina, in the years 534–540 he was a high ranking military official (perhaps *magister utriusque militiae*) placed in charge of the army in Africa and Sicily. One of the defenders of Rome during the siege of the city by the Goths, he fought against them later in northern Italy. He also remained in command of the Byzantine fleet on Adriatic (in the years 538–540). After the fall of Ravenna, he returned with Belisarius to Constantinople[168].

In 543 Ildiger, along with Theoctistus and Martin, *magister militum per Orientem*, arrived at the fortress of Citharizon, in the eastern part of the Asia Minor[169]. Ildiger is most likely to have served then as dux in Phoenicia Lebanese, together with Theoctistus, according to the division of the military command of the province set out above.

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[164] P r o c o p i u s, *De bellis*, II, 16, 17; II, 16, 18.

[165] *PLRE* IIIB, p. 1084 (*Rhecithangus*).

[166] *PLRE* IIIB, *loc. cit.*

[167] P r o c o p i u s, *De bellis*, II, 30, 29: ἦρχε δὲ αὐτῶν ᾿Ρεκίθαγγος ἐκ Θρᾴκης, ἀνὴρ ξυνετός τε καὶ ἀγαθὸς τὰ πολέμια (transl. H.B. D e w i n g, p. 549).

[168] *PLRE* IIIA, p. 615–616 (*Ildiger*).

[169] P r o c o p i u s, *De bellis*, II, 24, 13 (see the footnote no. 235).

Anastasius, dux of Palestine
[Anastasius, *dux Palaestinae*]
554

The Life of saint Sabas by Cyril of Scythopolis contains the only reference to Anastasius with which we are familiar. When the Second Council of Constantinople (5 May–5 June 553) condemned the teachings of Origen, all of the bishops of Palestine, except for Alexander of Abila, complied with the verdict. In addition to Alexander, the condemnation of Origen was also disapproved by the monks inhabiting the New Laura – a group of cells located on the Judean Desert, near Jerusalem. The patriarch of Jerusalem, Eustachius, is reported to have spent eight months trying to persuade the monks to accept the Council's decision, but to no effect. *Failing to make them join the Catholic communion, he decided to apply the emperor's orders and, relying on the assistance of Dux Anastasius, drove the monks out of the New Laura, thus liberating the whole eparchy from their plague*[170].

Cyril's narrative allows us to date Anastasius' action to the mid-554. According to Martindale, who draws on older studies by Ernst Stein, it came in the autumn of 554[171]. As for the post held by Anastasius, there can be no doubt that he served as dux. Cyril's account also clearly suggests that the events took place in *Palaestina Prima*.

Iuventinus, dux of Syria
[Iuventinus, *dux Syriae*]
572

Little is known about Iuventinus. He participated in the events of which an account was given by John of Epiphania, a historian living in the late sixth century. When Emperor Justin II refused to pay tribute owed to the Persians according to an agreement made in 562, a new war broke out. Marcian, the newly appointed *magister militum per Orientem*, was sent to the east to fight against Rome's

[170] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 90: καὶ μὴ πείσας αὐτοὺς τῆι καθολικῆ κοινωνῆσαι ἐκκλησίαι βασιλικαῖς κελεύσεσιν χρησάμενος δι᾽Αναστασίου τοῦ δουκὸς τῆς Νέας λαύρας αὐτοὺς ἐξέωσεν καὶ τὴν ἐπαρχίαν πᾶσαν τῆς αὐτῶν ἠλευθέρωσεν λύμης (ed. E. Schwartz); *but on failing to persuade them to be in communion with the catholic Church, he applied the imperial commands, and got the dux Anastasius to expel the from the New Laura and free the whole province from their destructive influence* (ed. Price, Binns).

[171] *PLRE* IIIA, p. 64 (*Anastasius 12*).

enemy. After crossing the river Euphrates and entering the territory of Osrhoene, Marcian dispatched a detachment of three thousand soldiers to Arzanene, a territory controlled by the Persians. The detachment was led by Theodore, Sergius, and Iuventinus, the last of whom was the commander of the troops stationed in Chalcis. The forces sent by Marcian to Arzanene returned with great booty[172].

According to Martindale, the campaign in question took place in the autumn of 572 and Iuventinus is likely to have served as dux of Syria (he resided in Chalcis which lay in *Syria Prima*)[173].

Anonymous person, dux in Lebanese Phoenicia
[Anonymus, *dux Phoenices Libanensis*]
581

Based in Emesa, this anonymous dux is credited with the decision to send Al-Mundhir away to Constantinople. Al-Mundhir was an Arab tribe leader and Rome's former ally who, in 581, was arrested on the charge of treason[174].

Anonymous person, dux of Arabia
[Anonymus, *dux Arabiae*]
c. 582

The only reference to this dux, not known by name and based in Bostra, can be found in the *Church History* by John of Ephesus. John mentions him in a long paragraph devoted to the activity of Naaman, an Arab tribe leader and Al-Mundhir's son. In taking revenge for the arrest of his father, Naaman carried out a number of retaliatory raids in Syro-Palestine, seizing significant booty. He also laid siege to Bostra, presenting its commander, described by John as a well-known and wise man, with an ultimatum. The city's inhabitants were required to surrender their weapons and to return everything which had once belonged to Al-Mundhir. Naaman threatened that the city would be pillaged and its inhabitants taken into

[172] John of Epiphania, fragm. I, 3: τρισχιλίους ὁπλίτας κατὰ τὴν ᾿Αρζανηνὴν οὕτω καλουμένην ἐκπέμπει μοῖραν, ἡγεμόνας ἐπιστήσας αὐτοῖς Θεόδωρόν τε καὶ Σέργιον, ἐκ τοῦ ᾿Ράβδιος τὸ γένος ἕλκοντας, ᾿Ιουβεντῖνόν τε, τῶν ἐν Χαλκίδι ταγμάτων ἡγούμενον. The expedition to Arzanena is also mentioned by Theophylact Simocatta. However, Marcianus is the only Byzantine commander to whom Theophylact refers by name (III, 10).

[173] *PLRE* IIIA, p. 760 (*Iuventinus*).

[174] *Chronicle up to 1234,* 74: *duci civitatis qui eum imperatori in urbem imperialem mitteret*. *PLRE* IIIB, p. 1435 (*Anonymus 43*).

captivity if his demands were rejected. The garrison commander raised his troops and sent them to fight against the Arabs whom he, John writes, despised as if they were ordinary vagabonds. However, the Arabs formed a battle line and defeated the Byzantine troops, killing their commander and a great number of his soldiers. As a result, although Bostra's inhabitants returned Al-Mundhir's property to his son, the various Arab groups kept ravaging the region for a long time. The dating of these events is based on John's account devoted to Naaman[175].

Eiliphredas, dux in Lebanese Phoenicia
[Eiliphredas, *dux Phoenices Libanensis*]
c. 586/588

Eiliphredas is mentioned twice in the *History* by Theophylact Simocatta. His name appears in the historian's account of the campaigns which Emperor Maurice carried out against the Persians – first in connection with the expedition led by Phillipicus *magister militum per Orientem*. The commander of the unit from Emesa, Eiliphredas was placed (along with Apsychus) in charge of the left flank of the Byzantine troops whom Philippicus divided into three large contingents shortly before the battle of Solachon. He is not explicitly mentioned in the account of the battle[176]. However, his direct involvement in the fighting is implied by the way Thophylact recounts the events – the information concerning the division of the Roman army into different formations is closely followed by a description of the battle itself, and the left wing of the Roman troops is reported to have made a significant contribution to the final victory.

Eiliphredas is mentioned again in the context of putting Priscus – the newly appointed *magister militum per Orientem* – in command of the army of the East. After arriving in Monocarton in northern Mesopotamia, Priscus failed to observe the custom that required every new commander meeting his troops for the first time to dismount from his horse and mingle with the crowd of ordinary soldiers. After he issued a number of unpopular orders, including a reduction in soldiers' pay, the army rebelled. Mutinous soldiers surrounded his tent. Eiliphredas, acting on the order from Priscus, tried to diffuse the explosive

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[175] John of Ephesus, *HE*, III, 42: *Quamobrem, eum dux haec audivisset, qui vir inclitus et clarus erat, tum iratus, exercitu suo collecto... Contra quaem aciem instruxerunt eumque superaverunt, et eum et multos ex exercitu eius occiderunt... nec usque ad longum tempus spoliatione.* *PLRE* IIIB, p. 1435 (*Anonymus 44*).

[176] Theophylact Simocatta, II, 3, 1: καὶ τὴν μὲν κεραίαν τὴν εὐώνυμον τῷ Εἰλιφρέδᾳ ἐπέτρεπεν, (ἄρχων δ᾽ οὗτος ἦν τῆς ᾽Εμέσης) ναὶ μὴν καὶ ᾽Αψὶχ ὁ Οὔννος τὴν αὐτὴν περιεβάλετο δύναμιν.

situation. He appeared in front of the rebellious soldiers, holding in his hand the image of Jesus Incarnate which, as was believed, had not been created by human hand. This time the source does not specify the post held by Eiliphredas. His intervention was of no avail. The soldiers pelted the holy image with stones and Priscus had to flee to Emesa. The future fate of Eiliphredas remains unknown[177].

Relying on the information presented above, one is justified in regarding Eiliphredas as dux of Phoenicia Lebanese (with the capital in Emesa). His term in office, in turn, should be dated to the years 586–588 (Phillipicus directed the military operation in 586 and the rebellion in the army in Monocarton broke out in 588)[178].

Germanus, dux in Lebanese Phoenicia
[Germanus, *dux Phoenices Libanensis*]
588

Upon his arrival in Edessa in the spring of 588, Priscus got in touch with Germanus, an official whose seat, or, as Theophylact writes, the throne was in Damascus. Warmly welcomed and served with dinner, Germanus enjoyed Priscus' company for the whole day, as is known from a detailed account given by Theophylact in his *History*. Soon before Easter, when Priscus set off from Edessa to the camp in Monocarton, Germanus led the unit that got to the camp in advance of Priscus to inform the soldiers of the arrival of the new commander[179].

At the time when the troops camped in Monocarton refused obedience to Priscus, Germanus served as the commander of the Roman troops in Phoenicia Lebanese. When Priscus took refuge in Edessa – we learn from Evagrius' account – the rebel soldiers laid siege to the city. Because the inhabitants refused to give Priscus away, the rebels captured Germanus, and, having resorted to everything from persuasion and threats to torture, finally forced on him the command of the army and hailed him as emperor[180].

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[177] Theophylact Simocatta, III, 1, 10–12: τῷ μὲν οὖν Εἰλιφρέδᾳ τὸ θεανδρικὸν ἴνδαλμα παρα γυμνώσας ἐδίδου (ἀχειροποίητον δὲ τοῦτο Ρωμαῖοι κατονομάζουσιν). See also: Theophanes, AM 6079.

[178] *PLRE* IIIA, p. 435 (*Eiliphredas*).

[179] Theophylact Simocatta, III, 1, 3: καὶ τῇ ᾿Εδέσῃ προσομιλήσας περιτυγχάνει Γερμανῷ, καὶ περιλαβὼν δεξιῶς κατησπάζετο ἐκ τῆς ἐπιδημίας γενόμενον (Δαμασκοῦ γὰρ οὗτος διεκόσμει τὸν θρόνον), ἀνακλίνας τε εἰς δεῖπνον αὐτὸν τῇ ἐπιούσῃ ἐφιλοφρονήσατο.

[180] Evagrius Scholasticus, VI, 5: βίᾳ δὲ καὶ χερσὶ ζωγρήσαντες Γερμανὸν τὸν ἐν Φοινίκῃ Λιβανησίας στρατιωτικῶν ταγμάτων ἡγούμενον, χειροτονοῦσι σφῶν ἡγεμόνα τό γε ἐπ' αὐτοὺς καὶ αὐτοκράτορα. See also: Nicephoros Kallistos, XVIII, 11.

In a much later version of the events, presented by Theophanes the Confessor, Germanus, to whom Theopanes refers as the governor of the inhabitants of Edessa, arrived at Monocarton, along with Priscus, and, following the rebellion raised by the soldiers against the latter, was, contrary to his wishes, hailed emperor[181].

In the summer of 588 the unit of one thousand soldiers led by Germanus came to the rescue of the city of Constantina besieged by the Persians. This relief operation was soon followed by the whole campaign in which four thousand Romans fought under Germanus' command against the eastern enemy. The Roman troops won a decisive victory at the battle of Martyropolis. Three thousand Persians were taken prisoner. Germanus was then recalled to Constantinople to be tried for staging the rebellion and accepting the imperial title. Sentenced to death, he escaped with life as the emperor cancelled the verdict. The gifts and honours which ensued were the reward he received for his victories in Mesopotamia[182].

According to Martindale, Germanus resided in Damascus and held the office of the dux of Phoenicia Lebanese. In the spring of 588, he was dispatched to northern Mesopotamia to join the army that readied itself to attack Persia. Martindale claims that Germanus, during his stay in Constantinople, may have been bestowed with the honorary title of consul. Following his rehabilitation, the road to the highest military rank seems to have been reopened to him (in the years 602–604, he may have served as *magister utriusque militiae*)[183].

Sergius, dux of Palestine
[Sergius, *dux Palaestinae*]
c. 634

Jacob's Doctrine (mid-seventh century) is the earliest source from which we derive our knowledge of Sergius. The work informs us of the death of this official, to whom it refers as a candidate (κανδίδατος)[184] Theophanes the Confes-

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[181] Theophanes, AM 6079: προσκαλεῖται δὲ καὶ Γερμανόν, τὸν τὴν ᾿Εδεσηνῶν ἀρχὴν πεπιστευμένον.

[182] Evagrius Scholasticus, VI, 9–10. See also: Theophylact Simocatta, III, 3, 8 (the source provides the number of troops led by Germanus at Constance. It also contains the account of the battle of Martyropolis); III, 4, 4 (the battle of Martyropolis); Michael the Syrian, X, 21 (ed. Zotenberg, vol. II, p. 359: Germanus is referred to as *un général*, and the rebel soldiers as Romans. Germanus is said to have received lavish gifts and honours in Constantinople: *présents et d'honneurs*).

[183] *PLRE* IIIA, p. 529–530 (*Germanus 6*).

[184] *Doctrina Iacobi*, V, 16.

sor says that when the Arabs, on the order of their leader, Abū Bakr, seized control of Al-Hira and of city and region of Gaza, Sergius arrived there at the head of a small unit from Palestinian Caesarea, and gave battle to the Arabs. He was one of the first of three hundred Byzantine soldiers who were killed in its course[185]. The Arab historian Al-Balādhurī reports that the clash took place in the region of Gaza, on the route between the territories of *Patricius* of Gaza (that is, Sergius) and the lands owned by the Muslims[186], or, to be more precise, about 12 miles from this city, as reported by an anonymous Syrian source[187]. Agapius of Hierapolis (the end of the tenth century) refers to Sergius as a *Greek patricius* or the *governor of the Greeks* from Caesarea. He was killed by the Arabs, along with a great number of soldiers who served under his command[188]. Eutychius of Alexandria in turn informs us that shortly before the battle Sergius entered into negotiations with an Arab leader, ʿAmr ibn al-Āṣ. The dux reputedly planned to take advantage of the negotiations to imprison ʿAmr ibn al-Āṣ and other Arab leaders. For some reasons this plan was not carried out[189].

In the account of Michael the Syrian, written in the twelve century, *patricius* Sergius is reported to have given the Arabs battle, having raised the unit which consisted of five thousand Romans and Samaritans. However, the Arabs turned out to be both stronger and better armed. It was the Samaritans whom they primarily massacred. Sergius (for the second time referred to as "patricius"), watching his people die (the Arabs slashed them with their swords as if they were cutting the ears of grain – as Michael vividly wrote) tried to escape from the battlefield. Pursued by the enemies, he fell off his horse, on which, however, he was quickly put back by the soldiers who were with him. Continuing his escape, he again fell off his horse and again was put on it by his companions. When he slid off his horse for the third time and his men for the third time tried to help him, he addressed them in the following way: *leave me alone here and save your own life. Do not drink with me from the goblet of death sent by the divine wrath of justice*.

[185] Theophanes, AM 6124: μόγις δὲ ἐλθὼν ποτε ἀπὸ Καισαρείας Παλαιστίνης Σέργιος σὺν στρατιώταις ὀλίγοις καὶ συμβαλὼν πόλεμον κτείνεται πρῶτος σὺν τοῖς στρατιώταις τριακοσίοις οὖσιν. A similar account is to be found in George Cedrenus (11th/12th century) (vol. I, p. 751): ἐλθὼν δὲ Σέργιος ἀπὸ Καισαρείας τῆς Παλαιστίνης σὺν ὀλίγοις στρατιώταις κτείνεται πρῶτος σὺν τῷ στρατῷ.

[186] Balādhurī, *Book of the Conquests*, p. 167–168. See also the French translation of this fragment in M.J. de Goeje, *Mémoire...*, p. 30–31.

[187] *Anecdota Syriaca* I, 116 (p. 17). Quoted in Latin translation: M.J. de Goeje, *Mémoire...*, p. 32 (contains the exact dating of the battle).

[188] Agapius, p. 454, 469.

[189] Eutychius, col. 1093–1094 [ed. B. Pirone, p. 328–329].

On hearing this, they left him lying on the ground and ran away. The pursuers appeared soon after, killing Sergius with sabres[190].

The account presented above can be interpreted in the following way. At the beginning of 634 Sergius worked as an imperial official in Palestinian Caesarea, exercising both military and, it appears, civilian jurisdiction over the region in question. He was a court dignitary, a candidate (initially the term denoted a member of the imperial guard, in the seventh century its meaning became more general) who was also entrusted with the post of the dux of Palestine. He may have also held the honorary title of patricius – although in this case it needs to be stressed that in the Arab and Syrian sources the word was often used to refer to any high ranking Byzantine official[191].

Kaegi presumes that Eutychius' account of the Byzantine-Arab negotiations held before the battle, although generally unreliable, may contain some true details. The Byzantines are known for resorting to kidnapping during political negotiations. Kaegi points here to an analogous attempt at kidnapping 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ before the battle of Ajnadayn. Fred Donner writes without any doubts about a patricius and military leader conducting the negotiations on behalf of Byzantium[192].

What is certain is that the battle of Datin, during which Sergius was killed, took place in the region of Gaza on 4 February 634. No source provides an account of the battle itself. According to Kaegi, who relies on the *Chronographia* by Teophanes, the Byzantines were defeated mainly because they were outnumbered. At that time Sergius' unit may have been the only imperial contingent operating south of Caesarea, and the Arab forces, from two to three thousand in number, may have been more than ten times larger than those fighting on the side of Byzantium. Moreover, before entering the battle, the Byzantines must have marched from Caesarea to the region of Gaza, thus covering a distance of

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[190] Michael the Syrian XI, 4 (*Le patrice Sergius*). In the main text I give English translation from French edition; to be more precise, I give here French text edited by V. Chabot (vol. II, p. 413): *Laissez-moi, et sauvez-vous vous-mêmes, de peur que vous ne buviez avec moi le calice de la mort que Dieu a envoyé sur notre empire dans sa grande colère de justice*. The details concerning Sergius' death are also provided by Bar Hebraeus (*Chronicon Syriacum*, p. 93), who also refers to Sergius as patricius, ascribing to him the command of five thousand foot soldiers, Romans and Samaritans. Bar Hebraeus also mentions the words uttered by Sergius shortly before his death. See also *Chronicle up to 1234*, CVIII: *Caesareae Palestinae degentem, cui ab Heraclio commissa fuerat urbs et regio*.

[191] Primarily: *PLRE* IIIB, p.1134–1135 (*Sergius 43*); W.E. Kaegi, *Byzantium...*, p. 93. On the function of the candidate see: A. Kazhdan, *ODB* II, p. 1100 (*kandidatos*). On the title of patricius see: A. Kazhdan, *ODB* III, p. 1600 (*patrikios*).

[192] W.E. Kaegi, *Byzantium...*, p. 94–95; F.M. Donner, *The Early...*, p. 115.

about 125 kilometres – according to Kaegi's calculations, and their fatigue may have been one of the reasons for their defeat. Yazīd ibn Abī Sufyān was in command of the Arab forces[193].

To my knowledge, de Goeje is the only scholar who calls into doubt the fact that Sergius was killed in the battle of Datin. In his opinion, Theophanes and Nicephorus, Greek authors who report this fact were misinformed. Sergius could not have been killed at Datin as the letter he is known to have received from the patriarch of Jerusalem dates, according to de Goeje[194], from the period after the battle. His death, he claims, must have come later, in the battle of Ajnadayn[195]. However, giving a precise answer to the question of when exactly the letter was written (the letter is very short and contains no elements that would make its exact dating possible), if possible at all, can now be viewed only in terms of a research problem that still awaits its solution. And it is possible to indicate at least one element that undermines the interpretation put forward by de Goeje. The most detailed information about Sergius' death on the battlefield is to be found in the account of Michael the Syrian, the source that is entirely omitted from de Goeje's analysis.

Kaegi points out that in *Anecdota Syriaca* there appears one more name of a Byzantine commander who took part in the battle of Datin – "bryrdn", that is, Vardan. However, this Vardan, according to Kaegi, is none other than Sergius, although it is unclear why this source refers to him by a different name. This may be a simple mistake resulting from the carelessness of the author of the source (although there seems to be no reason to accuse the source giving the exact date of a battle of inaccuracy). It is more likely that Sergius also bore (at least initially) an Armenian name by which he was known in Syrian and Arabic tradition[196].

In addition, the identification discrepancies concerns the Sergius mentioned in *Short History* by Nicephorus. The man in question is referred to by Nicephorus as *Sergius standing beside Nicetas*. Martindale is of the opinion that this phrase needs to be interpreted as referring either to a Sergius who was Nicetas' son, or to a Sergius who remained in the service of Nicetas, Emperor Heraclius' cousin. Nicephorus says that Sergius persuaded Heraclius to break trade relations with the Arabs and to withold the payment of thirty pounds of gold which they were going to receive, and that this was the reason why the Arabs decided to kill him. Sergius was sewn up in a camel skin. Drying, the skin grew increasingly stiff, and he suffered an excrutiating pain until he finally died[197]. Both de Goeje and Martindale are of the opinion that this Sergius needs to be equated with a "patricius"

[193] W.E. Kaegi, *Byzantium...*, p. 93.

[194] M.J. de Goeje, *Mémoire...*, p. 176.

[195] *Ibidem*, p. 34.

[196] W.E. Kaegi, *Byzantium...*, p. 88–90 ; see also: M.J. de Goeje, *Mémoire...*, p. 32.

[197] Patriarch Nicephorus, 20, p. 69–70 (ed. C. Mango).

or a "candidate Sergius" known from the earlier sources. There is only one but powerful argument to support this view: bearing the title of a candidate, Sergius could have direct access to the emperor and, consequently, could persuade him to change his policy towards the Arabs[198].

In dealing with this issue, Kaegi examined one more source, written by an Armenian author, Symeon of Ani, according to whom Sergius was some little known patricius of Damascus. However, we have no way of verifying this information. Kaegi is of the opinion that Symeon's text can be a distorted version of the account by Nicephorus, and that the Sergius known from the accounts of Theophanes, Michael the Syrian and a number of other authors is not the same person as the Sergius mentioned by Nicephorus[199].

Conclusions. The most obvious conclusion to be drawn from the analysis carried out above is that prosopographical data significantly fall off as we move along the axis of time, from the reign of Justinian to that of Heraclius. This is clearly seen in the attempt to compile a list of the governors of Syro-Palestinian provinces. We know only eight governors who remained in office between 529 and the beginning of the seventh century. Such a small number cannot of course be considered to be statistically representative of the whole period. Almost all of these governors held their posts in the initial period of Justinian's reign, that is, in the years 529–536 (one in 556). Six of them were the governors of *Palaestina Prima*, while the remaining two served as the governors of Arabia. There are no prosopographical data on the governors of northern Syria (provinces: *Syria Prima*, *Syria Secunda*, Phoenicia Lebanese), which may be surprising in view of a relatively good knowledge that we have of imperial officials who pursued their careers in this area in the earlier period, that is, from the fourth to the fifth centuries. Our sources are also lacking in information on Syro-Palestinian governors who held their posts in the years 629–635, that is, in the key period between the conclusion of peace with the Persians and the invasion of the Empire by the Arabs. Even the inscriptions, which grew in number faster than any other category of primary sources, add nothing new to our knowledge of the administrative cadres of Syro-Palestine[200]. With regard to the sixth and seventh centuries

[198] *PLRE* IIIB, p. 1134 (*Sergius 43*).

[199] W.E. K a e g i, *Byzantium…*, p. 89.

[200] However, only a very small number of published inscriptions come from the period under analysis. What is worse, new findings bring less information that the old ones. Out of 1997 included in the first four volumes of *IGLS* (published between 1929 and 1955) c. 123 (c. 6%) refer to the years c. 527–610. Only few of them, referrenced in this book, mention the governors and the duces. In the recently published 6 volumes (2008–2014), there are 2897 inscriptions (together with *addenda* and *corrigenda*), but c. 29 (c. 1%) concern the time c. 527–645/6.

the most recent volumes of *IGLS* (six volumes published after 2008), I have analysed here, contain inscriptions that are mostly honourifying and commemorative, or concern a variety of foundations[201].

Prosopographical data make it possible to draw up a list of tasks carried out by governors of Syro-Palestine. Their principal responsibility concerned the maintenance of law and order in their respective provinces. Furthermore, they were required to collect taxes, to ensure the security of provincial roads, to keep the cities supplied with food and water – a duty they discharged by supervising the maintenance of the existing aqueducts and by building new water reservoirs – and to offer assistance both in the erection of new churches and in the renovation of the old ones. There is of course nothing unusual about these duties. The protection of public order, including the pacification of mass rebellions such as those staged by the Samaritans in 529 and 556, the collection of taxes or the provision of support for the Church were all among the primary duties these officials were required to perform from the reign of Constantine the Great onwards.

Among the eight governors under discussion, there is only one (Stephen, the governor of *Palaestina Prima*) on whom it was possible to collect more detailed information. However, it is difficult to say whether his career was similar, at least in some respects (the high social status of the family to which he belonged or low-level positions which he held before being appointed governor), to the careers pursued by other Syro-Palestinian governors.

Greek sources of non-legal nature, in referring to these officials, are typically imprecise, usually relying on a semantically broad term *archon* (ἄρχων), or on other general terms such as *comes* (sing. κόμης) or *hegemon* (ἡγεμών), rarely using a more precise term *anthypatos* (ἀνθύπατος; which is a Greek counterpart

[201] Cf. *IGLS* XIII/2 (Bostra and the Nukra plain): inscriptions no. 9823 (538); 9713 (the years 538–539); 9739 (558); 9499 (544); 9662 (543); 9827 (the years 558–559); 9851 (the years 565–566); 9693 (the years 579–580); 9913 (575); 9770 (581); 9918 (the years 589–590); 9715 (590); 9703 (the years 593–594); 9710 (the years 593–594); 9740 (the years 598–599); 9858 (623) [cf. also *IGLS* XIII/1: none inscription devoted to the governors or dukes in the period between the reign of Justinian and Heraclius, {but cf. inscriptions no. 9130: Ζήνωνος δουκικ(οῦ) „officier ducal" in French translation}]; *IGLS* XV/1 (the Trachon region): inscriptions no: 163 (536); 179 (the years 542–543); 261 (568); 187 (the years 601–602). *IGLS* XV/2: inscriptions no: 416 (the years 551–552), 417 (the years 552–553), 363 (the years 563–564), 407 (the years 589–590). *IGLS* XVII (Palmyra): inscriptions no 498 and 499 (535 and 562 repsectively). *IGLS* XXI/5 (Jordan): inscriptions no 19 (the years 645–646); 20 (the years 624–625). More on the honorific inscriptions for the governors in the Late Antquity, cf. M. H o r s t e r, *Ehrungen spätantiker Statthalter*, AnT 6, 1998, p. 37–59.

of Latin *proconsul*). In the task of identifying the titles of high ranking officials, one has to rely on some general knowledge of the imperial administration, and the sources providing more specific information on imperial officials of a given time and region (mainly the legal acts issued by Justinian I), to the examination of which one owes such a knowledge, are categorically different from those that have so far been analysed here. The identification of a legal act specifying the title held by a provincial governor has been possible in only two cases: two governors of *Palaestina Prima*, both of whom were known by the name Stephen, bore the title of a *proconsul*. It is known that this title was conferred on the governors of this province from 536 onwards. Two governors of Arabia in turn are known to have borne military and civilian titles at the same time. This clearly indicates that they served as both civilian officials and military commanders as well. Such a combination was typical of the administration of this province.

Where these officials were from or what was their social background remains unknown, as does their education or religious denomination (Stephen, the governor of *Palaestina Prima*, is the only exception here). It is also impossible to reconstruct the details of their respective careers. Apart from Stephen, Theodore, the governor of *Palaestina Prima*, is the only official known by the title of *discursor*, that is, an imperial envoy. However, this information is difficult to verify, for we do not know the nature of this office, or the length of time he spent exercising it. It seems natural to assume that he held this low-level position early on in his career, clearly before his appointment to the post of governor.

Our knowledge of the governors of the Diocese of the East is equally scarce. Only ten governors of this large administrative unit are known to us, and of this group two are only presumed to have held the office in question. It is clear that no statistical analysis is possible in view of such a small amount of data at our disposal. These governors exercised public functions in the period between 529 and 609, with the exclusion of the whole reign of Justin II, and most of the reigns of Phocas and Heraclius.

Sources testify to a number of tasks which the *comites* of the East were required to carry out. In addition to discharging such duties as the collection of taxes or the protection of public order, the officials in question were tasked with the enforcement of the ban on marriages between colons in Mesopotamia and Osrhoene, or with the oversight of the reconstruction of bathhouses and portico in Antioch. The *comes* of the East was also responsible for the reconstruction of Palmyra destroyed by the earthquake and for the establishment of a new garrison in this city. We also know that these officials acted in their capacity as judges trying persons charged with sorcery. Again, there is nothing unusual about these

duties which also typified the activity of imperial officials in the two previous centuries. The analysis of our evidence, which is often very enigmatic, seems to confirm the opinion that the office of the *comes* of the East was essentially civilian in character, with military powers being only extraordinarily vested in its holders.

Their jurisdiction extended over the area of northern Syria, including Antioch. This seems to be confirmed in the Imperial Law of 535 which limited the jurisdiction of the *comes* of the East to the province of Syria *Coele*. These officials' social background, education, religious denomination or the details of their career remain mostly unknown. We know the ethnic origin of only two officials (Armenian and Syrian respectively).

While the nomenclature regarding provincial governors was generally fluid and imprecise, that pertaining to the governors of the Diocese of the East was applied in a more consistent way. They are usually referred to in Greek as *comites* of the East (κόμης τῆς ἀνατολῆς or κόμης τῆς ἕω). Sometimes variants of this basic term τὴν ἑῴαν ἀρχὴν διέποντος are used. In one case the official in question is referred to as ἡγεμών τῆς ἀνατολῆς. Given the context in which the last term appears, it can be assumed to refer to the *comes* of the East. One case concerns the official holding the title of ἐπάρχος τῆς Ἑῴας, traditionally associated with the prefect of the East. However, serious doubts are raised as to the identification of this official as the *comes* of the East.

Among the functionaries of imperial administration in Syro-Palestine, military commanders form the group that is most extensively documented. We have information about twenty two officials who were appointed to the executive military positions in the region in question in the period between 528 and 636. They were usually referred to as duces, which was a typical way of referring to the commanders of provincial troops. However, most of these officials (17) held their posts during the reign of Justinian I, and it was possible for us to learn about their existence because Byzantium's wars with Persia, in which they took part as commanders carrying out military operations mainly in Mesopotamia and northern Syria, are particularly well-documented. Of all military commanders known to us, two held their office during the reign of Justin II, two in the reign of Maurice, and one in the reign of Heraclius[202]. Because our sample is unevenly

[202] See also W.E. K a e g i, *Reflections on the Withdrawal of Byzantine Armies from Syria*, [in:] *La Syrie de Byzance à l'islam VII^e–VIII^e siècles. Actes du colloque international Lyon–Maison de l'Orient Méditerranéen, Paris – Institut du Monde Arabe, 11–15 Septembre 1990*, éd. P. C a n i v e t, J.-P. C o q u a i s, Damas 1992, p. 265–279 (the author stresses the fact that we do not know any military commander from the period that followed the battle of Yarmuk, which, in my opinion, also holds true for the period directly preceding this battle).

distributed in time, it cannot be treated as representative of the whole period. It is only with regard to the reign of Justinian I that it is possible to create a more coherent picture of military administration. Interestingly, the geographical distribution of our sample is also disproportionate. Except for one commander to whom the source refers as the dux of Syria (with residence in Chalcis, in the boundaries of *Syria Prima*), we do not know any other military official who was placed in charge of the Roman army in Syrian provinces. Eleven commanders are associated with Phoenicia Lebanese, eight with Palestina, and two with Arabia. The duties these officials were required to discharge were of purely military nature. In addition to fighting external enemies, the Arabs and the Persians, they were also ordered to pacify a group of monks who lived in the vicinity of Jerusalem and refused to obey the local patriarch.

C H A P T E R

III

Ideas

The city as the basis of territorial administration

The evolution of city elite

In the Empire encompassing the territories of the Balkans, Asia Minor, northern Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, Arabia and Egypt, there were more than nine hundred cities[1]. In the reign of Justinian I the cities provided the basic elements of which the provinces were built, as proved by the list drawn up by Hierocles. In the vicinity of densely populated metropolises, characterised by intensive political life, there lay small, quiet towns whose life was usually very slow. Small and large, known and unknown, all of them had one thing in

[1] I omit here the territories which were characteristic of the provinces of Syria and Palestine and did not enjoy the status of cities: large, quasi-autonomous villages (κομαί) and vast imperial domains (*regiones*, *saltus, tractus*), see: D. F e i s s e l, *L'empereur…*, p. 103–104. According to A.H.M. J o n e s (*The Later Empire 284–602. A Social, Economic and Administrative Survey,* vol. II, Oxford 1964, p. 713) the number of all administrative units in the eastern part of the Empire during the reign of Justinian I exceeded 1000, of which fewer than 100 enjoyed the status different from *poleis*.

common. They all served as centres of power. Local, state, civilian, military, as well as – equally important in the period under consideration – Church authorities were all based in Byzantine cities[2].

The city was clearly the most important cell of the Byzantine state organism, forming an integral element of territorial administration. The urban elites in turn guaranteed the implementation of the policy pursued by Byzantine emperors, serving as an "indispensable transmission" of imperial rule[3]. Such a view of the role of the city was based on the ideas as old as Rome itself. These ideas were still very much alive in the sixth and seventh centuries. However, both the structure and the role of the urban elites evolved in the course of Roman history, and most profound changes came in the era of the late Roman Empire.

At that time, the system of territorial administration based on city council (lat. *curia*, gr. βουλή) fell apart. Councilors (*curiales*, *decuriones* in Latin or βουλευταί, πολιτευόμενοι in Greek) usually toed the line of the wealthiest and most influential members of these local government institutions which were clearly oligarchical in character. Their existence was regulated by law. The criteria such as wealth, good origin and proper age[4], which one was required to meet to be eligible for election to these bodies, were grounded in the old Greek tradition, but Romans codified them into law. Beginning in the mid-second century, the right to sit on the council was passed from father to son. Successive rulers, including Justinian, upheld this hereditary rule[5].

The emperors' concern to make sure that the councils continued to be filled with the proper number of councilors stemmed from a significant role which these institutions still played in the administrative system of the Empire as well

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[2] Criteria by which to define the ancient city can be sought in a variety of spheres: political, demographic or even religious, cf. J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman City*, Oxford 2001, p. 1–25.

[3] D. Feissel, *L'empereur...*, p. 105.

[4] The required property (about 6 ha; *Theodosian Code*, XII, 1, 33, 342). We do not know if this constitution was in force in the whole of the Empire. It is more likely that this would have been the case with the constitution under which those whose property was worth at least 300 solids were compulsorily obliged to be the members of the city council (*CIC*, *Novellae*, III, 4, 439 A.H.M. Jones, *The Later...*, p. 738–739).

[5] See: M. Sartre, *L'Orient romain. Provinces et sociétés provinciales en Méditerranée orienatale d'Auguste aux Sévères (31 avant J.-C – 235 après J.-C.)*, Paris 1991, p. 146–147. On the hereditary nature of belonging to the councils in the imperial law: *CIC*, *Digesta*, L, 2, 1–14. For comparison see the comment in J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline...*, p. 104, 108–109; A. Laniado, *Recherches les notables municipaux dans l'empire protobyzantin*, Paris 2002, p. 46–47.

as from the fact that members of local elites increasingly evaded the curial service, considering it as particularly onerous[6]. In addition to typically municipal duties, discharged within the city walls *intra muros* and in the rural areas adjacent to the city, the councils were required to perform a variety of tasks (the so-called *munera*) on commission from the "imperial government". These tasks involved mainly the maintenance of public infrastructure (post offices or grain warehouses) and the collection of taxes. Members of city councils (sometimes all of them and sometimes some of them) were collectively responsible for failing to raise the expected amount of taxes[7].

The process of the decline of this institution took place over a long period of time, and although its intensity was different in different places, it was seen right across the Empire. It was the result of the centralisation and bureaucratisation of the state machinery: the self-government model of municipal administration was abandoned in favour of the centralised system controlled entirely by the state; the municipal officials were replaced with imperial ones; the *curiae* were deprived of their land and the income that went with it (and the loss of financial autonomy was of course harmful to the councilors)[8].

The decline of the *curiae* in the first half of the sixth century did not mean that these institutions formally ceased to exist (the municipal councils existed *de iure* until the turn of the ninth and tenth centuries at which time they were dissolved by Leo VI the Wise) just as the abolition of the councilors' collective

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[6] See: J. Nichols, *On the Standard Size of the Ordo Decurionum*, ZSSR.RA 105, 1988, p. 712–719. On the number of soldiers in the Antiochean curia see: P. Petit, *Libanius et la vie municipale à l'Antioche au IVe siècle après J.-C.*, Paris 1955, p. 323; A. Chastagnol, *L'évolution politique, sociale et économique du monde romain de Dioclétien à Julien*, Paris 1994, p. 284; A. Laniado, *Recherches...*, p. 6, 212.

[7] On *Munera* see: *CIC*, *Digesta*, L, 4, 1–9, 18–30. See also: A.H.M. Jones, *The Greek City...*, p. 153; A.H.M. Jones, *The Later...*, vol. II, p. 737–757; H. Horstkotte, *Systematische Aspekte der munera publica in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, ZPE 111, 1996, p. 233–255; L. Neesen, *Die Entwicklung der Leistungen und Ämter (munera et honores) im römischen Kaiserreich des zweiten bis vierten Jahrhunderts*, Hi 30, 1981, p. 203–235; A. Chastagnol, *L'évolution...*, p. 286–287, 296–297; C. Drecoll, *Die Liturgien im römischen Kaiserreich des 3. und 4. Jh. n.Ch.*, Stuttgart 1997; A. Laniado, *Recherches...*, *passim* (mainly p. 216–218). A summary of the discussion of collective responsibility regarding the collection of taxes see: A. Laniado, *Recherches...*, p. 116–131.

[8] See. J. Declareuil, *Quelques problèmes d'histoire des institutions municipales au temps de l'empire romain*, Paris 1911; K. Zakrzewski, *Upadek ustroju municypalnego w późnem cesarstwie rzymskim (The Fall of Municipal Régime in the Later Roman Empire)*, Lwów 1926, p. 1–20; idem, *La cité chrétienne*, Warszawa 1933, p. 2–17; A.H.M. Jones, *The Greek City...*, p. 192–196; idem, *The Later...*, vol. II, p. 737–757; A. Chastagnol, *L'évolution...*, p. 298–302; J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline...*, p. 105–109; A. Laniado, *Recherches...*, p. 4–18.

responsibility in tax matters did not mean that the members of the *curiae* were no longer involved in collecting taxes. Quite the contrary, they were still required to perform various fiscal tasks, as evidenced by the extensive legislation of Justinian I and Justin II (568–575)[9]. However, in discharging these fiscal duties, *curiales* were assisted by a variety of imperial dignitaries and municipal officials (to whom normative sources refer by a number of different names ἀπαιτεταί, ἐκλήπτορες, ὑποδέκται and ἀνυταί). However, there was no clear procedure to be followed in the selection of these officials. Their prerogatives were undetermined, and so was their legal status[10].

Despite the degeneration of the councils, the cities still provided the Empire with administrative cadres. The decomposition of the old elite ran parallel to the rise of the new one. In modern scholarship the members of this new elite are referred to as 'notables'[11]. This is a broad term under which one can include a variety of names by which these officials were known such as "chiefs" (*principales*, *primates* in Latin and πρωτεύοντες in Greek), the "excellent" (λογάδες in Greek), "those held in high esteem" (εὐυπόληπτοι in Greek), or simply "officials" (τέλει in Greek). Commonly used was also a longer formula "the owners and inhabitants" (*possessores et habitatores* in Latin and κτήτορες καὶ οἰκήτορες in Greek)[12].

The *principales* (πρωτεύοντες)[13] used to form the most influential part of city councils. Later this broad term (sixth-seventh centuries) was extended to include all of those who governed the cities: the *curiales*, the landowners, and, rarely, imperial officials. Both words seems to have carried some legal connotations, although there is no agreement about this among scholars. Laniado, relying on some source references from the fifth century and on the Novel LXXXIX, proclaimed in 539, claims that the status enjoyed by *principales* was determined by the hereditary nature of their position, passed from father to son[14]. Accord-

[9] *CIC*, *Novellae*, XVII, 8, 1 (535 r.); CXXVIII, 5 (545); CXXX, 3 (545 r.); CXLVII, 1 (553); CLXIII, 2 (575). See also: J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline...*, p. 123; A. Laniado, *Recherches...*, p. 109–110.

[10] A. Laniado, *Recherches...*, p. 112–115.

[11] A.H.M. Jones, *The Later...*, vol. II, p. 760; J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline...*, p. 110sqq; A. Laniado, *Recherches...*, p. 133sqq.

[12] Examples can be foud in J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline...*, p. 112–113, 120; A. Laniado, *Recherches...*, p. 171.

[13] The terms are equated and used alternately by A. Laniado. According to J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz (*Decline...*, p. 112–113, n. 53) only a Greek form remained in use in the Justinian's Code – *It would be a mistake to assume that the prōteuontes of the sixth century were simply the old principales under another name. A few might have been.*

[14] A. Laniado, *Recherches...*, p. 204–206. The work contains references to sources that prove the hereditary status of *principales* in the fifth century. On this issue, but with regard to a later period, see: *CIC*, *Novellae*, LXXXIX, 2, 1.

ing to Liebeschuetz, whose opinion is based on some papirological sources, it was through nomination that one became a member of this relatively small and selected group[15].

Two documents issued by Justinian I inform us of the role reserved for the *principales*[16]. In both documents the emperor designates a bishop and a number of principales (three in the first document and five in the second) to carry out an annual inspection of the way in which the means earmarked for the maintenance of municipal infrastructure (roads, bridges, bathhouses, aqueducts and so forth) were expended. Thus the goal of the notables was clearly to prevent fraud and peculation that must have occurred in this field. A total number of the *principales* discharging their duties in particular cities is not specified in either of these documents. Their analysis leads to the conclusion that the emperor did not designate all of his *principales* to carry out the financial inspections in question. In both cases the task was carried out just by a certain number of them, probably a dozen or so[17]. The status of a notable was subject to no time limits. Those to whom it was granted enjoyed it for life. Sometimes two other synonymical Greek terms were used to refer to this group: λογάδες and οἱ ἐν τέλει[18].

The new municipal elite included also those who were known as *possessores* or *habitatores*. Both groups are not easy to define because of the lack of legal norms determining their status. Generally, every single owner of a land estate could be referred to as a *possessor*, just as every person inhabiting a city could be referred to as an *habitator*. However, whenever these terms are used in the context of the administration of a given city, their meaning clearly becomes more specific. Liebeschuetz is of the opinion that it is possible to draw a fluid boundary between them. The term *possessores* refers to high ranking officials (or ex-officials), heads of particular offices of the court administration, provincial governors and high ranking military commanders, all of whom could be bestowed with the honourable title of *clarissimi*, thus becoming equal in rank to senators. The second term should be understood as referring to a group of less wealthy individuals: lower ranking military commanders, lower level officials working for provincial governors, or even merchants who never held any administrative position[19]. A more

[15] J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline...*, p. 112, n. 55.

[16] *CIC*, *Codex*, I, 4 (530), 26; *CIC*, *Novellae*, CXXVIII, 16 (545).

[17] J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline...*, p. 111; A. Laniado, *Recherches...*, p. 208–211.

[18] For examples, see: A. Laniado, *Recherches...*, p. 177–178 [on λογάδες: ACO II, 1, 3, p. 46; ACO, III, p. 108; Zosimus, V, 8, 3; *CIC*, *Novellae*, XV, 1. On οἱ ἐν τέλει see, for example, Choricius of Gaza, I, 1; VI, 37; VII, 13.

[19] J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline...*, p. 114–115.

nuanced understanding of both terms is offered by Laniado who, in trying to reconstruct their meanning, takes into account both the kind of source material dealt with here as well as the circumstances in which it was created. Generally speaking, possessors were owners of land estates, often associated with members of city councils (curiales) or with the city elite (proteuontes). The term habitatores, in turn, was used to denote people who did not own the land: craftsmen, labourers or colons[20].

New leaders formed assemblies apparently resembling old councils. However, these new bodies differed from the old ones in that they were not anchored in law. Their members were not collectively responsible for the functioning of their cities. One's participation in a municipal body of this new type depended on arbitrary decisions of the most influential individuals. There were no legal procedures regulating it. In comparison with the old *curiae*, the new councils were more fluid and amorphous. As a result, "the imperial government" lost much of its ability to enforce the execution of its orders by the municipal notables. However, the point emphasised by recent studies is that little is actually known about the rules that governed the activity of the notables. In dealing with the problem, scholars usually do not go beyond some general remarks indicating that the new councils were hierarchical in their structure and that the position held by a notable in this hierarchy could be determined by a specific function he exercised, the rank or title which was bestowed on him by the emperor, and/or by his real influence. The right to call these municipal assemblies, at least in the capital of the province, was vested in the governors, the bishops, and lower ranking imperial officials who were by origin connected with some local environment. The bishops had the right to call the councils' meetings also outside the capital of a province. In practice, much depended on the importance of a matter under consideration. It seems that the bishops' role became increasingly dominant, especially when it came to dealing with problems regarded as particularly important either for the emperor or for the local community. There is no evidence to suggest that the councils' proceedings, dominated by the city's most influential individuals, were to any extent democratic in character[21].

The new elite decided about everything which concerned the functioning of a given city[22]. Its members could also affect the way in which imperial officials

[20] A. Laniado, *Recherches...*, p. 180–189.

[21] J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline...*, p. 115–116, 122–123; A. Laniado, *Recherches...*, p. 212–213.

[22] J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline...*, p. 111; A. Laniado, *Recherches...*, p. 215–219.

discharged their duties in the provinces in which they were based. Beginning in the reign of Justinian I, municipal notables were given the right to control provincial governors[23]. Novel VIII, dated to 535, devoted entirely to the *suffragium*-related abuse, that is, one regarding fees paid by the candidates for civil service, made it possible for provincial population to impart information about all extra-fees imposed by a governor or his *officiales* on those who were about to take positions in imperial administration. In situations fitting those outlined in the Novel, one was required to submit a report, through the bishop and all proteuonts, specifying all misdeeds committed by imperial officials[24]. We also learn from the document that every new governor, during the ceremony held to mark his inauguration, was required to swear an oath in the presence of all local proteuonts and the bishop residing in his province[25]. The Novel XVII, also dated to 535, indicate that a governor assuming his office was required to set out the guidelines of the imperial policy before the assembly composed of the most pious bishop, the noble representatives of the clergy and lay officials[26]. In a constitution, published in 530, the emperor forbade the provincial governors, but also bishops, proteuonts, accept holders of specific positions of the central administration, and any documents they possessed, if they did not have imperial authorisation[27]. Under the Novel CXXX4, proclaimed in 556, the bishops and proteuonts were not only required to inform the emperor of all embezzlement committed by his officials but they were also expected to prevent imperial governors from abusing their power[28].

Of particular note in our context is the Novel CXLIX. Proclaimed in 569, it can be regarded as the fullest expression of the symbiosis of the imperial administration and municipal elites. Under the Novel, the bishop, *possessores* and *habitatores* enjoyed the right to nominate their own candidate to the office of

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[23] This was the amplification of the formula known in the principate era, according to which the assemblies of provincial cities could represent the interest of local communities in the capital of the Empire by, for example, bringing charges against provincial governors for the abuse of power (*de repetundis*). In 331 provincial population was given the right to express their opinion on local officials, including provincial governors, by acclamations made in theatres or hippodromes. See: J. D e i n i n g e r, *Die Provinziallandtage der römischen Kaiserzeit von Augustus bis zum Ende des dritten Jahrhunderts n.Ch.*, München–Berlin 1965, p. 161–165; A. L a n i a d o, *Recherches...*, p. 235–236.

[24] *CIC*, *Novellae*, VIII, 8.

[25] *CIC*, *Novellae*, VIII, 14.

[26] *CIC*, *Novellae*, XVII, 16.

[27] *CIC*, *Codex*, I, 4, 26.

[28] *CIC*, *Novellae*, CXXXIV, 3, *prooimion*. For commentaries on the constitutions referenced in the footnote see: A.H.M. J o n e s, *The Later...*, vol. I, p. 405–406; vol. II, p. 759; J.H.W.G. L i e b e s c h u e t z, *Decline...*, p. 152; A. L a n i a d o, *Recherches...*, p. 235–236.

governor. In exercising this right they were supposed to take into consideration especially the virtues of the candidate, whose "election" was held, it appears, in the capital of the province (which is also where he was later sworn in and where he presented the *mandata principis*), during the meeting of the council of the notables of a given region. The number of notables participating in such meetings depended on the size of a province in which the meeting was held, ranging from a few dozen notables for small provinces to a few hundred for large and mid-size units respectively. The lay participants, exceeding in number the representatives of the clergy, played a crucial role in the election of a given candidate[29].

Some remarks one can find in the chronicle by John Malalas and in the *Life of saint Saba* by Cyril of Scythopolis seem to be a good illustration of the attitude adopted by the imperial authorities towards the notables of the region of Syro-Palestine and of the way the local elites were used for realising imperial plans[30]. Malalas writes that Justinian I conferred one of the most honourable titles, *illustris*, on *possessores* from three Syrian cities: Antioch, Laodicea and Seleucia[31]. The exact date of this conferment remains unknown, but the analysis of Malalas' account leads to the conclusion that the emperor's gesture came in the wake of the earthquakes that hit the cities in the years 526–528[32]. In addition, the inhabitants of these cities were also granted 200 *litrai* and were exempted from paying taxes for three years to come[33]. Those who were bestowed with the title of *illustris* were automatically elevated to the status of Roman senators, including all the privileges that went with it. Thus the decision to confer the title on the *possessores* should be treated as a sign of the generosity shown by the emperor to the cities devastated by the seismic tremors. Among thousands of victims claimed by the earthquakes, there were many representatives of the local establishment. Justinian I was obviously interested in preserving a strong local elite whose reconstruction, although barely mentioned in sources from the period, was as important as the reconstruction of buildings, city walls and public infrastructure, which was so widely covered by ancient authors[34]. In the *Life of saint Saba*,

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[29] *CIC*, *Novellae*, CXLIX, 1. For the most recent analysis see: A. L a n i a d o, *Recherches...*, p. 225–231.

[30] Much information about the owners of the land estates (*possessores*) comes from the cities of Syro-Palestine (Antioch, Emesa, Apamea, Cyrrhus and Tyre). However, most of this information relates to earlier periods, the fourth to fifth centuries, and it does not illustrate the participation of this group in discharging administrative duties. See the list of sources prepared by A. L a n i a d o, *Recherches...*, p. 194–197.

[31] J o h n M a l a l a s, XVIII, 29.

[32] J o h n M a l a l a s, XVIII, 27–28.

[33] J o h n M a l a l a s, XVIII, 29.

[34] See also J.H.W.G. L i e b e s c h u e t z, *Decline...*, p. 112: it is not about *ordinary landowners* but about *a very selected group*.

in which we find another information relevant to the topic under discussion, Cyril of Scythopolis refers to the events which took place either in the reign of Justin I (518–527) or at the beginning of the reign of Justinian I. Cyril writes that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and local *possessores* were required to pay one hundred pounds of gold in/of tax arrears. However, for unknown reasons, imperial officials were unable to collect this money[35].

The «privatisation» of the state administration in provinces

Walter Kaegi indicates a phenomenon, seen in the reign of Heraclius, of seizing responsibility for the protection of some areas (for example, against the raids of the Arab nomads) by members of one family, usually representing local aristocracy. This «*privatisation*» of administrative duties, which had typically been discharged by state officials, needs to be regarded as an indication of the weakness of the Constantinopolitan government in respect of the administration of the Empire on the local level. A good example of this trend is afforded by the city of Barbalissus, the defence of which was entrusted to two brothers, probably local landowners. In addition to defending the city, they also took over other important tasks which had once been carried out by the state authorities, notably the collection of taxes.

According to Kaegi, the task of defending Syria against the Arabs did not remain exclusively in the hands of the imperial authorities. As in the rest of the Empire, the members of the local elite relied for the protection of their vast estates on their own private troops. Although poorly equipped and not intended for use in real battles, these private units can be regarded as forming the reserve troops of the regular army fighting against the Muslims. This practice also proves that local population was very reluctant to cover the cost of maintaining the army stationed in a given province, even if this army's main goal was to defend its territory. Local authorities, both aristocratic families and imperial officials, were not prepared to maintain large contingents of Byzantine troops and their allies, especially where there had never been military bases before (southern Syria, Palestine, Arabia). The inability of the local administration to supply Byzantine troops with necessary materials and the lack of cooperation between different authorities were to blame for logistical problems which caused chaos in the army before the battle of Yarmuk[36].

[35] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae*, 54.

[36] W.E. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the early Islamic Conquest*, Cambridge 1995, p. 34–37.

At the same time, the imperial government was inconsistent in its policies with regard to the privatisation of administrative duties, maintaining different restrictions on the possession, sale and production of weapons on a local level. However, it should be stressed that neither Syria nor Palestine had a tradition of organising self-defence through arming the local populace. Moreover, local communities, including their elites, did not in general participate in any significant clashes with the Arabs. Further, the authorities considered arming the civilian population too dangerous to even expect their participation. Armed civilians, it was feared, could slip out of control of the imperial officials[37].

Irfan Shahîd's Theme system or John Haldon's myth of Themes A short review of the two main ideas of Themes in Syria[38]

A general overview of the evolution of the administrative division of Syro-Palestine is strictly linked to the study of the emergence of the system of Themes (Themes, as we remember, were large militarized administrative units established in the seventh century). There is a huge body of literature devoted to this issue, which has attracted scholarly attention since the nineteenth century[39].

[37] *Ibidem*, p. 37, 50, 51–52.

[38] This text is published also in: *Byzantium and the Arabs. The Encounter of Civilisations (VI–VIII C. AD)*, eds. T. W o l i ń s k a, P. F i l i p c z a k, Łódź 2015 [Byzantina Lodziensia, 22; forthcoming].

[39] See for example: H. G e l z e r, *Die Genesis der Byzantinischen Themenverfassung*, Leipzig 1899 (reprint: Amsterdam 1966); E.W. B r o o k s, *Arabic Lists of Byzantine Themes*, JHS 121, 1901, p. 67–77; E. S t e i n, *Studien zur Geschichte des Byzantinischen Reiches vornehmlich unter den Kaisern Justinus und Tiberius Konstantinus*, Stuttgart 1919, p. 117–140; N.H. B a y n e s, *The Emperor Heraclius and the Military Theme System*, EHR 67, 1952, p. 380–381; W. E n s s l i n, *Der Kaiser Herakleios und die Themenverfassung*, BZ 46, 1953, p. 362–368; G. O s t r o g o r s k i, *Sur la date de composition du livre des thèmes et l'epoque de la constitution des premiers thèmes d'Asie Mineur*, B 1953, 23, p. 31–63; A. P e r t u s i, *Nuova ipotesi sull'origine dei „temi" bizantini*, Ae 28, 1954, p. 126–150; J. K a r a y a n n o p o u l o s, *Contribution au probléme des „Themes"*, HeC 10, 1956, p. 455–502; H.-W. H a u s s i g, *Anfange der Themenordnung*, [in:] *Finanzgeschichte der Spätantike*, ed. F. A l t h e i m, R. S t i e h l, Frankfurt am Main 1957, p. 82–114; A. P e r t u s i, *La formation des thèmes byzantins*, [in:] *Berichte zum XI Internazionalen Bizantinisten-Kongress*, München 1958, p. 1–40; G. O s t r o g o r s k i, *Korreferat zu A. Pertusi. La formation des thèmes byzantins*, [in:] *Berichte zum XI Internazionalen Byzantinisten-Kongressen*, München 1958, p. 1–8; J. K a r a y a n n o p o u l o s, *Die Entstehung der byzantinischen Themenordnung*, Munich 1959, *passim*; W.E. K a e g i, *Some Reconsiderations on the Themes (Seventh–Ninth)*, JÖB 16, 1967, p. 39–53; N. O i k o n o m i d é s, *Les premiers menions des thèmes dans la chronique de*

Controversy surrounds, in the main, the question of the origin of the Theme System, that is, the time and circumstances of its creation, the way it functioned and the etymology and meaning of the word Theme itself.

With regard to the Syro-Palestine region, the discussion centers around the views of an American scholar, Irfan Shahîd, which were first presented in 1983 during the symposium on the history of Byzantine Syria[40]. The paper delivered by Shahîd served as the point of departure for further research which yielded three other contributions published in *Byzantion* in the period between 1987 and 1994.

Shahîd proposed a thesis that in the Syro-Palestine region Emperor Heraclius established four large military districts, known as Themes. The changes to the old administrative system (in the ten provinces mentioned in the first chapter, and in Mesopotamia and Osrhoene) were to be enacted right after the withdrawal of the Persian troops in 628 and before the Arab invasion in around 636. Evidence for this claim comes from Al-Ṭabarī who, in the *History of the Kings and Prophets*, refers to the division of Syria into four military districts shortly before the Arab conquest. Shahîd is of the opinion that the Umayyads' division of Syro-Palestine into four large units, known as the *jund* (plur. *ajnād*), was inherited from the Byzantines, that is, it was patterned after the four Themes. This opinion can be supported by a number of arguments. The etymology of both words, Greek and Arabic, is the same. Both are meant to convey the meaning of an "army unit". The Arab names of the two junds Filasṭīn and Urdunn are derived from two Greek words (that is, the names of the Themes): Παλαιστινή and Ἰορδάνης. By attacking Syria, the Arabs were executing military operations in four different directions, organizing themselves into four corps led by four commanders. Further, the junds abutted the sea, stretching inland from the coast in parallel lines, and each *jund* had its own harbor. This seems to indicate that the administrative units in question were created not by the Arabs – who did not have their own fleet during the conquest of Syria and the years immediately

Théophane, ZRVI 16, 1975, p. 1–8; J. Howard-Johnston, *Theme*, [in:] *Maistor. Classical, Byzantine and Renaissance Studies for R. Browning*, ed. A. Moffatt, Canberra 1984, p. 189–197; E.P. Glušanin, *Voenno-gosudarstvennoe zemlevladenne v rannej Vizantii (k voprosu o genezise femnogo stroja),* VV 50, 1989, p. 14–25. See also: G. Ostrogorski (*Byzantinische Geschichte 324–1453*, ²München 2006, p. 67–70), who comments on older literature and T. Wolińska, *Sycylia w polityce cesarstwa bizantyńskiego w VI–IX w.* (*Sicily in Byzantine Policy, 6th–9th Century*), Łódź 2005, p. 52, p. 124, including commentaries on recent studies.

40 I. Shahîd, *Heraclius and the Theme System*, [in:] *Proceedings of the Symposium on Bilād al-Shām during the Byzantine Period*, ed. M.A. Bakhit, M. Asfour, vol. II, Amman 1986, p. 45–52.

following – but by the Byzantines, for whom strategic contact with Syria was maintained also through a sea route. In the period which followed the capture of Syria, the Arabs did not attempt, Shahîd claims, to build any cities that could assume the role of a new centres of administration because they relied on those built by the Byzantines, especially on the capitals of particular provinces. Byzantine influences, according to the American scholar, can also be seen in the system of administering the revenues of the Umayyad state, which was based on the Byzantine administrative division and a cadre of the officials that had once worked for the Byzantine Empire[41].

Shahîd placed particular emphasis on the period of five years, between 629 and 634 – to which he often refers as *quinquennium* – after the region was abandoned by the Persians and before it was seized by the Arabs. The establishment of the Theme dates, in his opinion, from this period. This epoch is poorly reflected in Byzantine sources – the establishment of the Theme during the reign of Heraclius is mentioned in the *Chronographia* by Theophanes, and in *On the Themes* by Constantine VII Porphyrogennetus; however, neither offers the exact date these new administrative units' creation – and this is why the Arab sources merit special attention. Their reliability, quite remarkable in this case – clearly stressed by Shahîd – results from two facts: that these texts were written not long after the events to which they pertain and that their focus is on the key region of the Umayyad state. For a long time these Arab sources received no attention from scholars, although they testify to the existence of post-Byzantine administrative units in the early Muslim Syria[42].

The Theme of Emesa, with its capital in Emesa (later *jund* Ḥimṣ/Emesa), was the largest of all four Themes, replacing the old provinces of *Syria Prima*, *Syria Secunda*, *Euphratesia*, Osrhoene and Mesopotamia. The Theme of Damascus replaced the province of Phoenicia Lebanese. Shahîd emphasises the fact that the division of this province into two military districts (which is referred to on a number of occasions in the second chapter) shows the increasing militarisation of the region during the reign of Justinian I. This process found its fullest expression in the establishment of the Theme of Damascus in the reign of Heraclius. Several factors underlay the establishment of the Theme of Jordan; the least of these: the mountainous nature of the region; others, its peculiar ethnic structure

[41] I. S h a h î d, *Heraclius and the Theme System: New Light from the Arabic*, B 57, 1987, p. 391–403.

[42] I. S h a h î d, *Heraclius and the Theme System: Further Observations*, B 59, 1989, p. 208–243.

(Galilee being mostly Jewish, Decapolis mostly Greek and the Arabs forming most of the population of Gaulanitis) with the Jews – followers of the Persians during their recent occupation – constituting its most precarious element, and the Ghassānids most reliable. The latter formed something of a counterweight against the Jews: a tool relied on for controlling them. What was also of great import was its strategic position. The Theme of Jordan was to play the role of the fourth and last safeguard zone against the invasion of the Holy Land by the Persians. According to Shahîd, the establishment of the Theme was also the result of the defeat inflicted on the Byzantines by the Persians at the battle of Adraha/Adraa (about one hundred kilometres south of Damascus, in the boundaries of the later jund known as Urdunn), at the turn of 613/614. This victory opened the Persians' way to Jerusalem. After that, the Byzantines, following the advice of their followers, the Ghassānid leaders, decided to reinforce the region by creating therein a separate military district. Ghassānid troops were supposed to play a leading role in it.

The names of the Themes, while clearly linked to their geographical location, also carried, as Shahîd claims, some religious connotations (as opposed to the Themes established later in Asia Minor and named after the large corps of the Byzantine army). The Theme of Palestine was in truth that of the Holy Land, as "Palestine" from the fourth century onwards was equated with the idea of the Holy Land as a region. The religiously charged name was particularly meaningful in the period following the Persian occupation which had proved so harmful for the Christians. In establishing the Theme of Holy Land – Palestine, Heraclius drew inspiration from the religious policy of Constantine the Great, a ruler he greatly admired. The name of the Theme of Jordan appeals to the Christians' sacred river – the Jordan. Constantine the Great wanted to be baptised in it, and Heraclius was the first Christian emperor to reside in its vicinity (in Galilee and Tyberiad). Tinged with Christian symbolism, the name was also designed to demonstrate the strength of Christianity in a region with a high Jewish population (whose anti-Byzantine and anti-Christian attitudes have been mentioned above). The two Themes lying further to the North, those of Edessa and Damascus, were named after their main cities. However, the name of the former also carried some Christian connotations, in connection with the Abgars.

The *thematisation* of Oriens also had to do with the implementation of the concepts that were to underpin the reign of Emperor Heraclius. It remained in line with the notion of the emperor-soldier and the emperor-crusader, the first ruler after Theodosius I (379–395) who fought in the field. The Themes were the work of an emperor who was familiar with the Syro-Palestine region; one

who drew on Christian symbolism in waging his wars, including those waged for the lands occupied by the Persians; and one who tried to create an image of the emperor-pilgrim arriving in Jerusalem with the wood of the Holy Cross, reclaimed from the Persians. According to Shahîd, the militarisation of the territorial administration by Heraclius was a result of the political experience he gained during his stay in the Carthaginian Exarchy, a militarised administrative unit in northern Africa, where his father served as an exarch.

In developing his line of reasoning, Shahîd highlights the importance of the Themes' maritime location, writing about the *«maritimisation»* of Themes. This feature of the new administrative order also originated in Heraclius' past. The emperor must have been aware of the importance of naval forces, to which he owed the recovery of Constantinople from Phocas. Each of the newly established Themes had at least one harbour – the Theme of Emesa commanded the harbour of *Syria Prima*, the Theme of Damascus that of Phoenicia Lebanese, the Theme of Jordan seized the harbours of Phoenicia Maritime and, in part, *Palaestina Prima*. The remaining harbours of the last province went to the Theme of Palestine. That the Themes' maritime location was informed by a specific administrative idea seems to be confirmed by the operations of the Byzantine fleet against the Arabs at the end of the 630s.

Shahîd's articles have elicited a wide response from other scholars, provoking a lively discussion in the course of which the views put forward by two historians, a German, Ralph-Johannes Lilie, and an American, John Haldon, came to the fore[43]. Lilie sent Shahîd a letter on 30 May 1988 in which he expressed serious doubts as to the establishment of Themes in Syria on the eve of the Arab invasion[44]. Shahîd's response came in an article of 1988. Appended to the article were Lilie's counterarguments which Shahîd addressed one by one, trying to dispell the doubts raised by the German author. According to Lilie, the fact

[43] Walter Kaegi found two articles published by Shahid to be an "important and welcome contributions to the debate on the emergence and nature of the themes". There is evidence to suggest, Kaegi concedes, that on the eve of the Arab conquest Heraclius introduced in Syria a "military government jurisdiction" or, to put it in a diffrent way, carried out a "militarization of governmental authority" over cities. However, Kaegi holds the opinion that Heraclius introduced institutional changes ad hoc and that it is impossible to definitively prove, as Shahid claimed, the origin of the Arab ajnāds. However, Kaegi refrained from adressing the details of the whole debate, cf. W.E. Kaegi, *Byzantium...*, p. 279–285 (quotations from p. 279).

[44] See also: R.-J. Lilie, *Die zweihundertjährige Reform: zu den Anfangen der Themenorganisation im 7. Und 8. Jahrhundert*, Bsl 45, 1984, p. 27–39; idem, *Araber und Themen. Zum Einfluss der Arabischen Expansion auf die byzantinische Militärorganisation*, [in:] *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, vol. III, *States, Resources and Armies*, ed. Av. Cameron, Princeton–New Jersey 1995, p. 425–460.

that the collection of taxes in Syria in Heraclius' days was still organised within the old provincial system is evidence of its continuous existence[45]. Shahîd admitted that, as Keagi proved some time ago[46], some elements of the order established by Diocletian and Constantine the Great continued during the reign of Heraclius, not only in the fiscal sphere but also in the military supply system as well. Inherited from the prior rulers' era were also the names of some of the army units. Yet as a whole the old administrative divisions were certainly replaced with the Themes. Shahîd also holds no doubt as to the semantics of the Arab term *jund* which in his formulation is an Arab translation of one of the aforementioned Greek terms which were used for a Theme. This opinion went counter to the views held by Lilie and Haase for whom the word *jund* was not a Greek borrowing but a distinctly Arab term denoting military districts from which the Arab troops launched their campaigns against the territories of their enemies. As Shahîd remarks, in sources from the period, the word *jund* is not used with regard to Egypt and Mesopotamia (conquered soon after the seizure of Syro-Palestine) whence the Arabs continued their territorial expansion. He also claims that the *thematisation* of Syro-Palestine was not necessarily followed by the implementation of the same administrative order in Asia Minor (although he does not rule this out). Just as in Anatolia, the names of Theme*s* did not have to be connected to military districts but were linked to their geographical location (as presented above). Relying on the information derived from the Arab historian Masʿūdī, Lilie argues that the Arab system of *junds* could not have developed from the system of Theme*s* as the latter were much larger than the administrative units created by the Arabs. Shahîd rejects this argument claiming that Masʿūdī, working in the first half of the tenth century, had no knowledge of the period of *quinquennium*. Finally, Shahîd disagrees with Lilie's opinion that the system of *junds* was purely Arab in origin, having its roots in the horizontal arrangement of trade routes which were used by the Arabs and which ran from the west to the east, from the coast to the interior of the Arabian Peninsula, in parallel to the later *junds*. The establishment of the *junds* along these routes aimed at facilitating trading interactions in the Umayyad state. For Shahîd, there can be no doubt that once the capital of the caliphate was transferred to Damascus, the trade

[45] Cf. C.-P. Haase, *Untersuchungen zur Landschaftsgechichte Nordsyriens in der Umayyadenzeit*, Hamburg 1972; F. Winkelmann, *Byzantinische Rang- und Ämterstruktur im 8. und 9. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 1985.

[46] W.E. Kaegi, *Notes on Hagiographical Sources for Some Institutional Changes and Continuities in the Early Seventh Century*, Byz 7, 1975, p. 63–70; idem, *Two Studies in the Continuity of Late Roman and Byzantine Military Institutions*, BF 8, 1982, p. 87–113; idem, *The „Annona Militaris" in the Seventh Century*, Byz 13, 1985, p. 591–596.

routes which ran vertically, from the north to the south of Syro-Palestine, rose in importance, while the economic role of the interior regions of the Arabian Peninsula clearly diminished.

According to Haldon, the Arab *junds* actually arose as a result of the metamorphosis of the structures of the Byzantine administration. However, it was not the Themes but the *ducats* (*ducatus*), that is, military districts remaining under the jurisdiction of military commanders, that underwent the metamorphosis. Haldon assumes that the *junds* formed an element inherited from the old Roman conception of the defence of the borderlands by the frontier units known as *limitanei*[47]. Haldon deals only with the southern regions of Syro-Palestine, that is, Phoenicia Lebanese (which, as we stated, was divided into two military zones), Palestine and Arabia, which, as Shahîd claims, cannot be taken to correspond to the *ducats*, that is, militarised districts, but to provinces (referred to in the sources from the period as *provinciae* or *eparchiai*) which were subject to the jurisdiction of both civil and military authorities. It seems obvious to Shahîd that the term *ducatus* does not refer to a military district or to any other territorial unit. Instead, it was used to denote the function exercised by military commanders known as duxes. In addition, as Shahîd stresses, the *junds*' boundaries do not fully correspond, and sometimes did not correspond at all, to the military districts of the Roman army (especially so in the case of the *junds* of Ḥimṣ/Emesa).

In trying to offer a more historically convincing justification for the establishment of Syrian Themes at the time of Heraclius, Shahîd distinguished three stages in Rome and Byzantium's military presence in the East (the first stage covering the period from Diocletian to Jovian, the second from the mid-fourth over the whole of the fifth century, and the third stage lasting from the reign of Anastasius to that of Maurice). Shahîd discerned that the military activity intensified – which seems quite natural – when the Roman Empire faced a threat of invasion from Persia: the greater the threat, the greater the activity. His analysis of the decisions of successive emperors provided him with no evidence for existence of four military districts. For this reason Shahîd believes that their establishment should be attributed to Emperor Heraclius. The third article he wrote on this issue is mostly devoted to a polemic in which he engages with Haldon's arguments. Published in 1994, it is his last paper devoted to the problem[48].

Thus, Shahîd's "final word" on the Themes, did not close the debate. In a comprehensive study, published one year later, Haldon stated that the answer to the question of the origin of the Theme system was not to be found in a *mythi-*

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[47] J. H a l d o n, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, Cambridge 1990, p. 215.

[48] I. S h a h î d, *Heraclius and the Unfinished Themes of Oriens: Some Final Observations*, B 64, 1994, p. 352–376.

cal reform carried out by Emperor Heraclius[49]. According to this scholar, the *jund* system already existed at the outset of Muslim rule in Syria. However, doubts concern the number of these regions. While some Arab sources indicate that there were three administrative districts of this kind, others suggest that there were four of them. The belief in the existence of military districts, known as Themes and established by Heraclius, is based on two weak premises: first, on an analogy with the system of the *junds*, the internal structure of which, in fact, remains unknown and, second, that a general specificity may be drawn from the Byzantine Theme system, which was indeed connected with the establishment of military districts but in a later period. The English scholar stresses the fact that in theory it is also possible to assume that the establishment of the Muslim *junds* was the result of some Persian influences. Such a possibility, he claims, although highly unlikely, cannot be entirely ruled out.

Drawing on some Arab chronicles and geographical works from the ninth to eleventh centuries, Haldon also tries to reconstruct the territorial shape of particular *junds*. His analysis supports the opinion that the arrangement of the *junds* generally did not resemble the network of Byzantine provinces. In his opinion the territories of particular *junds* clearly correspond, although not always fully, to the military regions governed by military commanders known as duxes: the *jund* of Damascus encompassed the former territory of the dux of Phoenicia and, in part, the dux of Arabia; the *jund* of *Hims* encompassed the district of the dux of Emesa in Phoenicia Lebanese. The *jund* of Filasṭīn was an exception. It covered almost exactly the former area of the province of *Palaestina Secunda*, plus two cities, Tyre and Acre, from Phoenicia Maritime.

Haldon also differs from Shahîd in his evaluation of the reliability of Arab sources. The information about the division of Syria into four regions and about the strike of four armies led by four commanders is to be regarded, according to this scholar, as reflecting some earlier accounts, both written and oral, that are difficult to reconcile. The Umayyad and Abbasid tradition sought to highlight the role of particular individuals; hence we have information about a number of commanders who led the Arab forces. Thus, the sending of four distinct corps to fight against Byzantium is open to doubt. It is more likely that the Empire was attacked by small Arab groups that, as the invasion progressed, were joined by other Arab units.

[49] J. H a l d o n, *Seventh-Century Continuities: the Ajnād and the „Thematic Myth"*, [in:] *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, vol. III, *States, Resources and Armies*, ed. Av. C a m e r o n, Princeton 1995, p. 379–423 [= J. H a l d o n, *Seventh-Century Continuities...*, [in:] *The Formation of the Classical Islamic World*, vol. VIII. *Arab-Byzantine Relations in Early Islamic Times*, ed. M. B o n n e r, Burlington 2004 (reprint: 2009), p. 95–139].

In recently published literature on the subject – for example, in the eighth volume of the series entitled the *Formation of Classical Islamic World* edited by Michael Bonner – Haldon's argumentation is considered conclusive and, as such, sufficient to reject the views presented by Shahîd[50]. In the monograph devoted to Emperor Heraclius, published one year earlier than the volume mentioned above, Kaegi, in dealing with the years 629–633, fails to mention the issue of the establishment of the Theme*s* in Syro-Palestine. Kaegi claims that the central government had no time to establish structures of local administration in the area left by the Persians. Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that the imperial administration began to disappear from the region of the Jordan river[51]. Recently, the discussion of the Theme system in Syro-Palestine seems to have lost momentum, little is said either for or against the view crediting Heraclius with the creation in Syro-Palestine of the administrative units in question, and no new hypotheses have been put forward concerning this issue[52]. This may indicate that primary sources provide no incentives for further investigations, and the whole debate is likely to assume a more historiographic dimension. Perhaps, it is by analysing the method employed by scholars involved in the debate that we will be able to identify the most probable solution to the issue under discussion.

The Empire's central administration in the face of the administrative inefficiency of local government

In the absence of source material that could shed some light on the functioning of provincial administration in Syro-Palestine during the Arab invasion and in the period directly preceding it, our attention is drawn to a lengthy remark about an imperial official, Theodore, who participated at the battle of Yarmuk.

Among the Greek sources, Theophanes the Confessor's *Chronographia* provides the most detailed information on Theodore. We learn that Heraclius' brother, Theodore, was defeated by the Arabs. After that, the emperor appointed Baanes as the new commander and sent sacellarius Theodore, whom he placed at the head of a large army, to fight the invaders. After arriving in the environs of

[50] M. B o n n e r, *Introduction*, [in:] *The Formation of the Classical Islamic World*, vol. VIII, p. XXIII–XXIV.

[51] W.E. K a e g i, *Heraclius…*, p. 192–227 and p. 218–219 in particular.

[52] See a number of articles published in *Proceedings of the International Symposium – Byzantium and the Arab World. Encounter of Civilizations (Thessaloniki, 16–18 December 2011)*, ed. A. K r a l i d e s, A. G k o u t z i o u k o s t a s, Thessaloniki 2013, p. 544.

Emesa, Theodore killed many Arabs, including their *emir*, and pursued the rest of them as far south as the environs of Damascus, where, on the Barada river, he pitched his camp. Then the emperor ordered Baanes and sacellarius Theodore (the second such use of this term in the source) to get back from Damascus to Emesa, at the head of the army of forty thousand men. Both conducted successful military operations between Damascus and Emesa[53]. In the following year, in response to the Arab campaign near Damascus, Baanes asked sacellarius (whose name this time is not mentioned) to send forces capable of resisting numerous Arab units. The Byzantine troops set out from Emesa. On 23 July these troops were defeated by the Arabs (Theophanes adds that the Byzantine units rebelled and, having refused obedience to Heraclius, proclaimed Baanes as emperor). The Arabs started the battle when sacellarius' units began to retreat. The Byzantines, who could not clearly see their enemies because of the strong wind blowing from the south, suffered defeat after being pushed into the ravines of the Hiermouchthas river. Theophanes remarks that the Byzantine army, led by both commanders, consisted of forty thousand soldiers[54].

Other sources, such as the *Chronicle of Edessa*[55], the *Chronicle* of George Cedrenus[56] or the anonymous *Chronicle up to the Year 1234*[57] also refer to Theodore as sacellarius or Sacellarius, taking in the last case (judging by the capital letter) the name of the office for the name of the person. Gregory Bar Hebraeus also informs us that the Byzantine army was led by an imperial treasurer of Edessa. However, the name of the treasurer is not mentioned[58].

[53] Theophanes, AM 6125: ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς προχειρίζεται ἕτερον στρατηγόν, ὀνόματι Βαάνην, καὶ Θεόδωρον σακελλάριον μετὰ Ῥωμαϊκῆς δυνάμεως πέμπει κατὰ Ἀράβων·παραγενόμενος δὲ εἰς Ἔμεσαν συναντᾷ πλῆθος Σαρακηνῶν, καὶ ἀποκτείνας αὐτοὺς καὶ τὸν ἀμηρεύοντα αὐτῶν, τοὺς λοιποὺς ἀπελαύνει ἄχρι Δαμασκοῦ.

[54] Theophanes, AM 6126. See also information (Michael the Syrian, XI, 6) about Romans' defeat at the battle of Yarmuk. However, Michael does not provide the names of Byzantine commanders and does not identify them in any other way. Balādhurī (*Book of the Conquests*, p. 207), in a lenghty passage devoted to the battle says that Heraclius entrusted the army to one of his commanders and that the Arab allies were under the command of Djabala ibn Al-Ayham al-Ghassāni. He also provides information concerning the number of soldiers who fought on both sides. According to Armenian historian, Sebeos (XXX, p. 97), the emperor entrusted the command of the army to one of his eunuchs who is not mentioned by name. The same author says that all of the Byzantine officers were killed in the battle (XXX, p. 98).

[55] *Chronicle of Edessa*, p. 37: *magnum exercitum... cuius dux nominabatur Sacellarius*.

[56] George Cedrenus, vol. I, p. 745, 746 (his account is very similar to that given by Theophanes, quoted above).

[57] *Chronicle up to 1234*, CX: *misit Heraclius... Sacellarium patricium Edesse*.

[58] Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon syriacum*, p. 94.

The only source, however late, which contains information that Heraclius appointed Theodore as the commander-in-chief of the army of the East is the *History* by Nicephorus. The narrative of Nicephorus' work indicate that Theodore was appointed to the position in question in Antioch, after another Theodore, the emperor's brother, who was probably involved in a plot against the ruler, was sent away from this city to Constantinople[59].

The sources presented above indicate that Theodore, Heraclius' brother, was defeated at the battle of Ajnadayn (in summer, probably on 30 July 634)[60]. Thus, the takeover of the command of the army of the east by Theodore must have taken place after that date. According to de Goeje, all the Byzantine contingents during the battle of Yarmuk remained under the command of Theodore Sacellarius[61]. This view is fully shared by Kaegi who considers Theodore to have been *sacellarius* and, probably, *cubicularius* and *magister militum per Orientem*[62]. For Martindale it is certain that Theodorus, whom the scholar also characterises as *sacellarius*, served as *magister militum per Orientem*[63]. Donner, too, regards Theodorus as commander-in-chief, but, in referring to him, uses only the title of *sacellarius* (in Arab sources, collected by this scholar, the commander of the Byzantine troops is known as the eunuch al-Saqallar, that is, by a term which is evidently of Greek origin)[64].

According to Martindale, the information, provided by Armenian and Arab sources, that Theodore was a eunuch is probably correct, for the office of imperial *sacellarius* was often, if not always, entrusted to eunuchs. It is also possible that he held the prestigious title of patricius – a term by which he is referred to in an anonymous Syrian source[65].

[59] Patriarch Nicephorus, 20, p. 69–70 (ed. C. Mango).

[60] W.E. Kaegi, *Byzantium...*, p. 98; F.M. Donner, *The Early...*, pp. 128–129. Donner indicates that it cannot be ruled out that the battle of Ajnadayn took place in January 635. However, he believes that the clash is most likely to have taken place during the last months of Abū Bakr life and that the latter must have received the information about the victory shortly before his death, that is, in August 634.

[61] M.J. de Goeje, *Mémoires...*, p. 107: *Le commandement en chef avait été confié à Théodore le Sakellarius.*

[62] W.E. Kaegi, *The Early...*, p. 112: *...Byzantine commanders..., including the sacellarius [certain] and possibly also cubicularius Theodore Trithurios*; p. 119: *The supreme byzantine commander was the sacellarios and probably magister militum per Orientem*.

[63] *PLRE* IIIB, p. 1279–1280 (*Theodorus 164 qui et Trithyrius*).

[64] F.M. Donner, *The Early...*, pp. 132, 145–146.

[65] *PLRE* IIIB, p. 1279 (*Theodorus 164 qui et Trithyrius*).

Theodore was killed in the battle of Yarmuk (August–September; a decisive encounter probably took place on 20 August 636)[66]. Although his death is not explicitly stated in Latin or Greek sources[67], it is indicated by some oriental sources[68].

The office of *sacellarius*, of which we have relatively good knowledge, was probably formed during the reign of Zeno (474–491). Initially, its holders, also known as *cubicularii* (after *cubiculus*, that is, a bedroom) were entrusted with the management of imperial chambers and with the administration of imperial treasure (σακέλλιον). The office was certainly conferred on the eunuchs (although it is difficult to prove that it was conferred exclusively on them), so Theodore was no exception here[69].

The figure of Theodore, who by all accounts served as the commander-in--chief of the Byzantine army at the battle of Yarmuk, proves that the government relied on some occasional expedients for coping with extraordinary circumstances. Kaegi claims that the elevation of Theodore to the position of the commander-in-chief was designed to demonstrate that the central authorities were deeply concerned about the army and that the soldiers did not have to worry about their pay. At the same time the Constantinopolitan government made itself capable of controlling the means expended on the military campaigns conducted against the Arabs. Although sources from the period raise no criticism of such moves, the appointment of Theodore to the position of the commander-in-chief of the army operating at the time of the greatest threat of the Arab invasion seems to be questionable.

Theodore was not a military strategist and was not involved in preparing the plans of military action against the Arabs. The Byzantine strategy of the 30s and 40s of the seventh century was not based on any bureaucratic or organisational assumptions. Instead it originated in the experience of armed conflicts with the nomads. Such conflicts were as often as they were short-lived and did not engage large Byzantine units. While fighting with the Arabs, the imperial troops did not reach the desert interior, confining their operation to the fortified area. This was the so-called defense-in-depth strategy typifying the Byzantine military activity in Syria[70].

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66 M.J. de Goeje, *Mémoires...*, pp. 108–110; F.M. Donner, *The Early...*, p. 133, 316, n. 209. The work includes a detailed list of sources on the battle of Yarmuk. W.E. Kaegi, *Byzantium...*, p. 114.

67 Theophanes, AM 6126; George Cedrenus, vol. I, p. 745; Patriarch Nicephorus, 20, p. 69–70 (ed. C. Mango).

68 Michael the Syrian, XI, 6 (p. 402, vol. II, ed. Chabot); cf. also unclear passage of Ṭabarī, *Tarikh*, vol. XI, p. 104 (ed. Kh. Yahya).

69 A. Kazdan, P. Magadlino, *ODB* III, pp. 1828–1829 [s.v. *sakellarios*].

70 W.E. Kaegi, *Byzantium..*, p. 59.

The person of Theodore illustrates not only some strategic aspects of the war, but also the problems connected with the functioning of local administration, both civil and military. The maintenance of the army, including the obtaining of recruits and Arab allies, rested on payments in cash. However, the system, in view of a variety of financial difficulties with which the state struggled, did not always work properly. In addition to cash payments, the army was still supplied with natural goods (for example, food rations), their provision was often organised by local authorities or by local notables acting under illusory control of the local administration. There was no clear-cut and coherent system of financing the civil and military administration. Problems encountered in paying the army, Arab allies and local administration slowed down the process of finding an effective method of defending the province[71].

[71] *Ibidem*, pp. 36–37.

Final remarks

In the period preceding the Arab conquest, the structure of the imperial administration in Syro-Palestine was very old. The reign of Justinian the Great conserved the arrangement of provincial borders which had been established by emperors ruling in the fourth and fifth centuries – mainly by Diocletian, Theodosius I and Theodosius II. At that time, Syro-Palestine was divided into ten provinces. Particular provinces differed from each other in size. The vastest of them (Euphratesia, Syria Secunda, Phoenicia Lebanese, Palestina *Tertia*) occupied the external margins of the territory in question. Except for Euphratesia, clearly separated from Mesopotamia by the river Euphrates, the eastern borderlines of these provinces seemed to vanish into the sands of the Syrian Desert. There were no borders running along some natural elements of landscape. Borders that separated particular provinces most often corresponded to those delineating the territories of particular cities. This was the rule that had governed the administrative organization of Syro-Palestine ever since the takeover of the region by the Romans.

The reign of Justinian saw the establishment of a new province – Theodorias. However, the reasons for its establishment are not quite clear. Having nothing to do with the reforms of provincial administration launched by Justinian a few years later, the creation of Theodorias was probably politically motivated and aimed to strengthen the position of Justinian's new wife, Theodora, at the im-

perial court. The emperor's relationship with her was frowned upon in some court circles. Theodora's Syrian origin, referred to in some sources, may also have been a factor in the establishment of the province, but further investigations are required in order to confirm this hypothesis. Theodorias was the eleventh and last province created in Syro-Palestine. The arrangement of these eleven administrative units survived until Heraclius' reign. There is no evidence to suggest that there occurred any change in the number of provinces in the second half of the sixth or in the beginnings of the seventh centuries.

Originating in the reign of Diocletian, the old division of provincial government into provinces, a diocese and a prefecture also continued into the reign of Heraclius. The division into provinces, joined together into the Diocese of the East which in turn was part of the Prefecture of the East, survived either until the invasion and occupation of Syro-Palestine by the Persians (about 622–629) or until the establishment of themes by Heraclius (629–633) or until the conquest of Syro-Palestine by the Arabs (around 633–640). All of this indicates that the Byzantines created in Syro-Palestine the lasting administrative structure.

It was different with the structure of military administration. Since the early Empire, it had been based on the limes system and on a number of large districts governed by duxes. This division ceased functioning not later than during the reign of Justinian. The collapse of this administrative structure did not mean of course the end of the Byzantines' military presence in Syro-Palestine. However, given the scarcity of our sources, the reconstruction of the location and of the size of military units stationed in this region in the second half of the sixth and in the beginnings of the seventh centuries can only be hypothetical.

It is basically impossible to provide a collective portrait of those who were entrusted with the task of governing the provinces of the region or who were placed in charge of the military units based there. Prosopographical data are lacking. In the vast majority of cases the social and ethnic origin, education, religious denomination or the career path of particular officials remain unknown. In terms of the number of primary sources to which we owe our knowledge of the issue, Justinian's reign compares favourably with the reigns of other emperors. But even in this case we know only the names of particular officials.

There is no evidence to suggest that the provincial administration, both in terms of its structure and "human resources", evolved under some Persian or Arab influences. The "ethnic infiltration" of the imperial administration which can be seen in the appointment of the locals (Syrians, Arabs or Armenians) to the position of provincial governors, known to have taken place in the previous periods, may have also been the case in the period under consideration, although primary

sources provide us with little or no information about this phenomenon. The reason for this, however, may lie in the fact that the sources containing any relevant information on the topic in question have not been preserved (with regard to the period under consideration there are just a few cases of the 'ethnic infiltration' mentioned above that are recorded in the surviving sources). We do not know who the men were governing the Byzantine Middle East at the time when it was falling to the Empire's enemies. The example of Theodore, who fought on the Byzantine side in the battle of Mu'ta, in 629, illustrates the divergence of opinions concerning the identification of officials of the period as well as the imprecision of scholarly attempts to determine the office held by Theodore.

Given the scarcity of sources and scholars' limited interest in administrative matters, our knowledge of the way in which the administrative apparatus worked is also limited. The most general conclusions seem to be the safest ones. Thus, modern scholarship points to the process of a gradual degeneration of the state apparatus in particular provinces in Syro-Palestine. It is known that the cities formed the lowest level of the local administration, with their elites implementing the imperial policy. However, the way the city elites were defined changed. Old city councils lost much of their influence and there emerged new, informal bodies whose members, while playing key roles in the administration of the cities, owed their privileged position to their wealth, connections or official functions. From the viewpoint of imperial authorities, these groups (often led by local bishops) were quite effective, although their legal status remained undetermined and the state's ability to control the way they performed their duties was clearly limited. Points are even raised that the execution of some of the tasks, typically carried out by the state, such as, for example, ensuring security in the region, was assumed by private persons. Seen across the whole Empire, this phenomenon also took place in Syro-Palestine. Although in this case, too, it is difficult to give a more detailed account of this process as there are very few sources on which to rely in reconstructing it.

Military administration also underwent changes. The deployment of border units in the limes zone formed something of a filter separating Byzantium's friends from its enemies. The conception of the limes-filter was abandoned in the sixth century. The inefficiency of the local administration was one of the factors in the abandonment of the system. Allied Arab tribes rose in significance. Operating in the area with which they were well-acquainted, these Arab tribes were used to fight against the Persians or against their kinsmen hostile to Byzantium.

The issue of the establishment of the theme system by Heraclius, which has received much attention from scholars of today, remains unresolved. Two

opposing theories, one giving Heraclius credit for the creation of the theme system and one denying the ruler's involvement in its establishment, seem to have taken hold in modern scholarship. The verification of each of the theories, if it proves impossible through the analysis of the sources from the period, may be attempted through a thorough examination of the method used by each side of this debate. Remaining in dispute for longer than a century, this issue, it appears, needs to be approached from a purely historiographical angle.

Abbreviations

AE – L'année épigraphique

Ae – Aevum. Rassegna di scienze storiche, linguistiche e filologiche

AnC – Antigüedad y cristanismo. Monografías históricas sobre la Antigüedad tardía

ANRW – *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung*, vol. II, Principat, Bd. I–XXXVII, eds. H. Temporini, W. Haase, New York–Berlin 1974–.

AnT – Antiquité Tardive. Revue internationale d'histoire et d'archéologie (IV^{e} – VIII^{e} s.) publiée par l'Association pour l'Antiquité Tardive.

B – Byzantion. Revue internationale des études byzantines

BASOR – Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Resarch

BEO – Bulletin d'Études Orientales

BF – Byzantinische Forschungen

BMB – Bulletin du Musée de Beyrouth

Byz – Byzantina / Βυζαντινά. Ἐπιστημονικό Ὄργανο Κέντρου Βυζαντινών Ἐρευνών Αριστοτελείου Πανεπιστημίου

BZ – Byzantinische Zeitschrift

ChH – Church History

DOP – Dumbarton Oaks Papers

EHR – English Historical Review

EKB – Encyklopedia Kultury Bizantyńskiej

HeC – L'Hellenism contemporain

Hi – Historia. Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte

IGLS – Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie

IExJ – Israel Exploration Journal

JAEIBL – Qadmoniot. Journal for the Antiquities of Eretz-Israel and Bible Lands

JHS – Journal of Hellenic Studies

JÖB – Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik

JPOS – Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society

JRA – Journal of Roman Archaeology

JRS – Journal of Roman Studies

NEArch – Near Eastern Archaeology

ODB – *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. A. Kazhdan et al., vol. I–III, New York – Oxford 1991.

PLRE III A, B – *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, ed. J.R. Martindale, vol. IIIA-B, Cambridge 1992.

RB – Revue Biblique

RE – Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft, eds. G. Wissowa, W. Kroll, Stuttgart 1894–1978

Sy – Syria. Archéologie, art et histoire

TIR. IP – *Tabula Imperii Romani. Iudaea. Palaestina. Eretz Israel in the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine Periods. Maps and Gazetteer*, eds. Y. Tsafrir, L. Di Segni, J. Green with contributions I. Roll, T. Tsuk, Jerusalem 1994.

TM – Travaux et mémoires du Centre de recherches d'histoire et civilisation byzantines

USS – U schyłku starożytności

VV – Vizantijskij Vremennik

ZDPV – Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins

ZPE – Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik

ZRVI – Zbornik Radova Vizantinološkog Instituta

ZSSR.RA – Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Romanistische Abteilung

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CIC, Edicta
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CIC, Codex
Corpus iuris civilis. Codex Iustinianus, ed. P. Krüger, vol. II, Berolini 1954.

CIC, Novellae
Corpus iuris civilis. Novellae, ed. R. Schöll, G. Kroll, vol. III, Berolini 1954.

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Index of persons

The index contains both historical and contemporary figures. Contemporary names and surnames are written in italics. Marked in bold are the names of Byzantine officials – biographical information on these officials is to be found in the second chapter of this book.

Index of ethnic and geographic names

The index contains both ancient and selected contemporary names. Slash is used only with regard to ancient names and indicates names that are alternative to the basic or primary names preceding this mark. Square brackets are used only with regard to some selected ancient names. The form of the names placed in square brrackets is the same as that used in Notitia Dignitatum, ed. N. Faleiro. Put in round brackets are contemporary names as well as the name of the state in which a given city or settlement was located. Question marks express doubts concerning the contemporary location of ancient cities.

E

F

G

H

I

J

K

L

M

Byzantina Lodziensia
1997–2015

I.

Sławomir Bralewski, *Imperatorzy późnego cesarstwa rzymskiego wobec zgromadzeń biskupów*, Łódź 1997, pp. 197.

[*Les empereurs du Bas-Empire romain face aux conciles des évêques*]

II.

Maciej Kokoszko, *Descriptions of Personal Appearance in John Malalas' Chronicle*, Łódź 1998, pp. 181.

III.

Mélanges d'histoire byzantine offerts à Oktawiusz Jurewicz à l'occasion de Son soixante-dixième anniversaire, éd. **Waldemar Ceran**, Łódź 1998, pp. 209.

IV.

Mirosław Jerzy Leszka, *Uzurpacje w cesarstwie bizantyńskim w okresie od IV do połowy IX wieku*, Łódź 1999, pp. 149.

[*Usurpations in Byzantine Empire from the 4^{th} to the Half of the 9^{th} Century*]

V.

Małgorzata Beata Leszka, *Rola duchowieństwa na dworze cesarzy wczesnobizantyńskich*, Łódź 2000, pp. 136.

[*The Role of the Clergy at the Early Byzantine Emperors Court*]

VI.

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[*History and bibliography raisonn*é *of Polish Byzantine studies (1800–1998)*]

VII.

Mirosław Jerzy Leszka, *Wizerunek władców pierwszego państwa bułgarskiego w bizantyńskich źródłach pisanych (VIII – pierwsza połowa XII wieku)*, Łódź 2003, pp. 169.

[*The Image of the First Bulgarian State Rulers Shown in the Byzantine Literary Sources of the Period from the 8th to the First Half of the 12th Centuries*]

VIII.

Teresa Wolińska, *Sycylia w polityce cesarstwa bizantyńskiego w VI–IX wieku*, Łódź 2005, pp. 379.

[*Sicily in Byzantine Policy, 6th–9th Century*]

IX.

Maciej Kokoszko, *Ryby i ich znaczenie w życiu codziennym ludzi późnego antyku i wczesnego Bizancjum (III–VII w.)*, Łódź 2005, pp. 445.

[*The Role of Fish In Everyday Life of the People of Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium (3rd–7th c.)*]

X.

Sławomir Bralewski, *Obraz papiestwa w historiografii kościelnej wczesnego Bizancjum*, Łódź 2006, pp. 334.

[*L'image de la papauté dans l'historiographie ecclésiastique du haut Empire Byzantin*]

XI.

Byzantina Europaea. Księga jubileuszowa ofiarowana Profesorowi Waldemarowi Ceranowi, ed. **Maciej Kokoszko**, **Mirosław J. Leszka**, Łódź 2007, pp. 573.

[*Byzantina Europaea. Studies Offered to Professor Waldemar Ceran*]

XII.

Paweł Filipczak, *Bunty i niepokoje w miastach wczesnego Bizancjum (IV wiek n.e.)*, Łódź 2009, pp. 236.

[*The Riots and Social Unrest in Byzantine Cities in the 4th Century A.D.*]

XIV.

Jolanta Dybała, *Ideał kobiety w pismach kapadockich Ojców Kościoła i Jana Chryzostoma*, Łódź 2012, pp. 480.

[*The Ideal of Woman in the Writings of the Cappadocian Fathers of the Church and John Chrysostom*]

XV.

Mirosław J. Leszka, *Symeon I Wielki a Bizancjum. Z dziejów stosunków bułgarsko-bizantyńskich w latach 893-927*, Łódź 2013, pp. 368.

[*Symeon I the Great and Byzantium: Bulgarian-Byzantine Relations, 893–927*]

XVI.

Maciej Kokoszko, **Krzysztof Jagusiak, Zofia Rzeźnicka**, *Dietetyka i sztuka kulinarna antyku i wczesnego Bizancjum (II–VII w.)*, part I, *Zboża i produkty zbożowe w źródłach medycznych antyku i Bizancjum (II–VII w.)*, Łódź 2014, pp. 671.

[*Dietetics and Culinary Art of Antiquity and Early Byzantium (2^{nd}–7^{th} c.)*, part I, *Cereals and cereal products in medical sources of antiquity and early Byzantium (2^{nd}–7^{th} c.)*]

XVII.

Andrzej Kompa, **Mirosław J. Leszka**, **Teresa Wolińska**, *Mieszkańcy stolicy świata. Konstantynopolitańczycy między starożytnością a średniowieczem*, Łódź 2014, pp. 490.

[*Inhabitants of the Capital of the World: The Constantinopolitans between Antiquity and the Middle Ages*]

XVIII.

Waldemar Ceran, *Artisans et commerçants à Antioche et leur rang social (seconde moitié du siècle de notre ère)*, Łódź 2013, pp. 236.

XIX.

Dietetyka i sztuka kulinarna antyku i wczesnego Bizancjum (II–VII w.), part II, *Pokarm dla ciała i ducha*, ed. **Maciej Kokoszko**, Łódź 2014, pp. 607.

[*Dietetics and Culinary Art of Antiquity and Early Byzantium (2^{nd}–7^{th} c.)*, part II, *Nourishment for the Body and Soul*]

XX.

Maciej Kokoszko, **Krzysztof Jagusiak**, **Zofia Rzeźnicka**, *Cereals of antiquity and early Byzantine times: Wheat and barley in medical sources (second to seventh centuries AD)*, Łódź 2014, pp. 516.

XXI.

Błażej Cecota, *Arabskie oblężenia Konstantynopola w VII–VIII wieku. Rzeczywistość i mit*, Łódź 2015, pp. 213.

[*The* Arab *Sieges of Constantinople in the 7th and 8th Centuries*: *Myth and reality*]

XXII.

Byzantium and the Arabs: the Encounter of Civilizations from Sixth to Mid-Eighth Century, ed. **Teresa Wolińska**, **Paweł Filipczak**, Łódź 2015.

XXIV.

Zofia A. Brzozowska, *Sofia – upersonifikowana Mądrość Boża. Dzieje wyobrażeń w kręgu kultury bizantyńsko-słowiańskiej*, Łódź 2015, pp. 478.

[*Sophia – the Personification of Divine Wisdom: the History of the Notion in the Byzantine-Slavonic Culture*]

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